

THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND ITS CEREMONIES

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THE HOLY SACRIFICE
AND ITS CEREMONIES

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F. THOMAS BERGH, O.S.B.,
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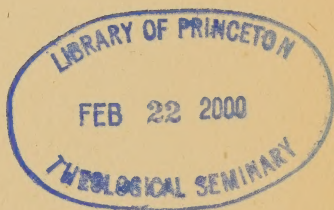
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THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND ITS CEREMONIES

AN EXPLANATION OF ITS MYSTICAL
AND LITURGICAL MEANING

BY

M. C. NIEUWBARN, O.P., S.T.L.



TRANSLATED FROM THE REVISED EDITION BY

L. M. BOUMAN

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<div> <div>Last Gospel.</div> <div>Blessing.</div> <div>Concluding Prayers.</div> <div>V. Conclusion.</div> </div>		
<div>II. Offertory.</div> <div> <div>Secrets. Orate Fratres. Lavabo. Offertory.</div> <div>Preface (Transition).</div> </div>	<div>III. Consecration.</div> <div> <div>Prayers after Consecration.</div> <div>Consecration.</div> <div>Prayers before Consecration.</div> </div>	<div>IV. Communion.</div> <div> <div>Pater Noster (Transition).</div> <div> Prayers after Communion. Holy Communion. Domine, non sum dignus. . . . Agnus Dei. . . . </div> </div>
<div> <div>Credo (Transition).</div> <div>Gospel. Epistle.</div> <div>Collects. Gloria. Kyrie. Introit.</div> <div>Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.</div> <div>I. Preparation of the Offerers.</div> </div>		
<div> <div>Summary of the Parts of the Mass.</div> <div>"The Sacrifice of the <i>Mass</i> is the Perpetuation of the Sacrifice of the <i>Cross</i>."</div> </div>		

PREFACE

DEEPLY to be deplored is the wide-spread ignorance, even among pious Catholics, of the Church's imposing ceremonial, and still more of the meaning which underlies it. We cannot but pity those souls—often far advanced—who thirst for truth and beauty, and yet turn aside from the perennial streams of poetry which ever flow from the doctrines of the Church and from her wonderful liturgy, wherein lives a soul of faith and love, a soul therefore of the greatest beauty.

There is assuredly a yearning for the supernatural in literature and art, even among non-Catholics: but the paths they tread only lead them astray. For in these days of revived interest in symbolism and mysticism men easily forget that the most perfect form of symbolism is to be found in the liturgy of the Church, and more particularly in that of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Still more saddening is the thought that hundreds, perhaps the bulk of the faithful, forego so much spiritual consolation for want of a deeper knowledge of their own holy religion.

The touching appeal of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray," re-echoes, no doubt, in many a heart. Well, the Church does not turn a deaf ear to the petition; she teaches her children to pray, she never ceases instructing them in worship by means of her beautiful prayers and ceremonies. But souls remain practically strangers to her practices; they seem to be quite indifferent to

the necessity of entering more earnestly into the mighty inner life of the spouse of Christ. Many do not realise that such an inner life exists.

How are we to explain this? One reason, perhaps, is the dearth of works on divine worship, and particularly on the most sublime mystery which the world has ever witnessed, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A treatise of this kind, then, may not be without its use.

One good sign of our age is the revival of interest in liturgical study. Men begin to realise that their unfamiliarity with the interior life of the Church is a serious loss. This is reassuring, and may lead to a growth of spirituality in the lives of our people in the near future. Hence, far from lamenting and complaining, I prefer to make this humble effort to further the hopeful movement which has begun.

And this is the main purpose of my book. My ardent wish is to increase man's love for the Holy Sacrifice by a better understanding of its mysteries; to reveal something of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of which St. Paul speaks (Eph. 3:8), and to open out a new field for the mind, so that devotion of the heart may gather more abundant fruit, were it only in the souls of a few. My earnest hope is to be of service to many, to the simple and the learned, to both young and old, that all may realise better the deep love of Jesus Christ, which daily flows in endless streams from the Divine Sacrifice of our altars.

This work being written for a large circle of readers must take a popular form. It must be attractive, simple, and concise, to avoid being too deep or too lengthy. This is no easy task, since every part of the Mass has been so exhaustively studied. My chief aim was to condense explana-

tions without sacrificing completeness; and, on the advice of friends who have shown their interest in the work, I have given the subject, as far as possible, a scientific setting.

Should this treatise lead some to further study of the liturgy, they will find invaluable help in the works which I have cited.

Where quotations have been thought necessary they are exclusively taken from Holy Writ or from liturgical prayers, unless otherwise stated. As for the translation of the prayers, I have followed the text usually adopted in missals for the laity.

A final observation on the origin and explanation of the ceremonies of Holy Mass. These ceremonies did not all originally bear a mystical meaning, but they have—at least in some cases—acquired this sense at a later period; in the beginning, mostly through popular usage, then through the Church adopting them in her formularies of consecration and public prayers. Although mention is frequently made of historical growth, by way of illustration, the main purpose of the book is to explain the hidden meaning of the Holy Sacrifice and of its ceremonies, as they are now found in our worship: a meaning which has often been given to them quite independently of their historical origin. Our explanation, however, does not follow the purely personal opinions of liturgical writers on the subject of religious ceremonial: for often passages from Scripture are rather arbitrarily quoted to bear out considerations which are undoubtedly very pious.

It is the aim of this book to base the interpretation of the mystical sense and of the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice exclusively on the universally accepted explanations of the Church, just as they

are presented in her formulas of consecration, in papal documents, official prayers, and theological works.

I now have the pleasant task of expressing my sincere gratitude to many kind friends, and not least to my publisher, for having been enabled to begin the humble apostolate which my labours have in view, to help souls to feel more deeply and love more intensely the divine beauty of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

THE AUTHOR.



THE LAST SUPPER
XIIITH CENTURY WORK: LUCCA CATHEDRAL

PREFACE TO SECOND DUTCH EDITION

THIS second edition requires a preface mainly to express gratitude for the favourable reception accorded to the first.

I hoped indeed that this humble liturgical study would meet with some measure of success, for recent developments in literature and art seemed to suggest that such an effort might fall in with the requirements of modern taste. But I must candidly own to astonishment on hearing from the publisher that he had sold out an edition of nearly 10,000 copies within three weeks.

My heartfelt thanks are due first and foremost to the Bishops of Holland and Belgium for the support afforded by their kindly interest; to the Press, which has favourably reviewed my book; and last, but not least, to my publisher, whose zeal and devotion have afforded me invaluable help throughout.

There are only a few slight changes in this new edition.

And now that this Manual is about to find its way into many Catholic homes, and I hope, into many Catholic hearts, my ardent wish is that it may by God's blessing do something to spread a love of the sacred liturgy, particularly among the young. It is to those who are chiefly concerned in the training of the next generation, priests in the different parishes and heads of educational

establishments, that I look for co-operation. They can help to assure the success of this slight contribution towards the very necessary, but as yet not very satisfactory, liturgical training of Catholics.

M. C. N.

NÿMEGEN : *March* 1907.



THE FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES
A MYSTICAL FIGURE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
(FROM THE CATACOMBS)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SUMMARY OF THE PARTS OF THE MASS . . .	v
PREFACE	vii
PREFACE TO SECOND DUTCH EDITION . . .	xi

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY MASS: CATHOLIC TEACHING . . .	I
--	---

CHAPTER II

THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS	II
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS	23
-----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

LITURGICAL VESTMENTS: THE CHALICE AND OTHER REQUISITES FOR HOLY MASS	90
---	----

CHAPTER V

LITURGICAL COLOURS	103
------------------------------	-----

THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND ITS CEREMONIES

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY MASS: CATHOLIC TEACHING

BRILLIANT figures of speech must rest on a solid groundwork of simple truth if they are intended to express clear ideas.

The Church's mysticism and symbolism, which we propose to explain, are in many respects nothing more than the figurative expression of the doctrines of faith. Far from being rejected as sources of error, they have met with encouragement, as long as the Church's authority has been recognised, and their interpretations have been rooted in the soil of Christian doctrine.

As the symbolical sense of many of the ceremonies and prayers of Holy Mass forms the subject of this treatise, it will not be out of place here to introduce a brief summary of Catholic teaching on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, since it forms the cornerstone upon which rests the whole religious edifice.

What, then, we ask, is a sacrifice? and more particularly: what is the Sacrifice of the Mass?

By a sacrifice in the strict sense is generally understood the offering of a sensible thing to God, through a lawful minister, as an act of homage and adoration. The offering consists in the destruction, in some sense, of the object, to symbolise, in a manner intelligible to all, a perfect oblation made

to God, an unreserved acknowledgment of His sovereignty.

All sacrifices have this meaning, however numerous or varied they may be, or however different may be the nations or tribes which offer them. Whether they be Jews, the chosen people of God, or the heathen races surrounding them, all interpret sacrifice in this sense. For this impulse to present offerings is an instinct of humanity. And indeed, when we trace the course of God's revelation to His creatures, we meet with an uninterrupted series of sacrifices, all of which foreshadow with ever-increasing definiteness the oblation of Jesus Christ. First there are the sacrifices offered to God by the patriarchs, then the oblations prescribed by Moses for his people, and finally the Sacrifice which Christ has instituted for us and which completes all preceding forms of worship.

The Jews, we are told in the Old Testament, had more than one kind of sacrifice, which answered the different needs of the soul :

Burnt-offerings—holocausts or sacrifices of honour and praise—which were an act of adoration.

Sacrifices of propitiation, sin-offerings or sacrifices of expiation, which freed from the legal or external debt due on account of sin, though powerless in themselves for the internal expiation of guilt.

Peace-offerings, thank-offerings, sacrifices of promise or voluntary sacrifices, which were the privilege of those who were at peace with God.

By whatever names these sacrifices were known, they were but distant types of the one true Sacrifice of Christ. For the sacrifices of the Old Law were of themselves inefficacious ; they derived all their merits from a living faith in the Redeemer to come and from the future merits of His sacred Passion.

For then, as well as under the natural law and as even at the present day, the infinite source of all graces was the expiatory Sacrifice of the Divine Saviour, and all preceding sacrifices were but types of the one acceptable oblation of the future. "The sacrifices of the Old Law," says St. Augustine, "were but types: they foretold and typified in various ways the Sacrifice of Christ," of which our Mass is the commemoration.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, then, is the clean oblation of the New Law, in which, by the words of consecration, the substance of bread is changed into the sacred Body of Christ (which change the Church calls Transubstantiation), and the substance of wine into His precious Blood, and in which Christ, the beloved Son of God, is thus offered to His Heavenly Father.

Our Divine Saviour Himself instituted this Sacrifice on the eve of His sacred Passion, when His disciples were gathered round Him for the Last Supper. He then offered Himself to His Heavenly Father under the appearances of bread and wine, and not only gave His Apostles the power, but imposed on them the obligation of repeating, without shedding of blood, the Sacrifice of His own Body and Blood, a Sacrifice which was soon to be consummated on the Cross amid the most cruel sufferings.

In compliance with this divine precept, the first priests, the Apostles, and their successors in all ages, have offered up the Holy Mass.

And it is indeed a real Sacrifice. All the essentials are present :

(a) There is the oblation of a sensible thing. For although the sacred Body and Blood of our Lord cannot be perceived by our senses, still we know, on the authority of Christ's words, that they are

present under the visible appearances of bread and wine.

(*b*) There is the destruction of the Victim, but it is a mystical destruction which takes place without shedding of blood:

For (1) the essential part of the Mass is the Consecration. The words then uttered cause the sacred Body and Blood of Christ to be present under separate forms. This separation (or symbolical destruction of the Victim) without shedding of blood represents, commemorates, and renews the Sacrifice of the Cross, which required Christ's actual death.

(2) Moreover Christ is, as it were, annihilated under the species of bread and wine. The glory of Heaven is hidden, He makes no sign, He allows Himself to be received by good and bad alike. In fact He humbles Himself in the Eucharist infinitely more than in the stable of Bethlehem.

(3) Finally, the Victim is in a certain sense destroyed, since Christ gives Himself as food in Holy Communion.

(*c*) A lawful Minister offers the Sacrifice to God. Christ Himself indeed is the chief Minister of Sacrifice, though the offering is also made by the hands of a living instrument, the priest, consecrated for that very office. "It is the same Christ," says St. Ambrose, "who is at the same time Priest and Victim."

(*d*) The end of the Mass is the incommunicable homage paid exclusively to the sovereign majesty of God.

Often, it is true, Mass is celebrated in honour of a Saint. But the Saint is not the object of this act of worship, for the Mass is offered up to God alone. God alone can accept an act of adoration, such as the Divine Sacrifice.

But indirectly we honour the Saint whose Mass we say :

(a) For we return thanks to God for the graces vouchsafed to these glorious confessors of the Faith, and, as St. Augustine says, "stimulate our ardour in the fight for the palm of victory, after the example of the Christian hero whose noble deeds we commemorate."

(b) And again we ask with confidence during the Holy Sacrifice for the help of the Saint's powerful intercession.

The Mass, then, is a sacrifice ; and if we ask what sacrifice, it is the wondrous commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross : nay more, it is the self-same oblation. For the Victim is the same, viz. Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Minister in this Divine Action is the same, viz. our Redeemer, working through His representative, the priest. "When, therefore," says St. John Chrysostom, "you see the priest celebrating Mass, know then that the hands of Christ invisible are outstretched to complete the Holy Sacrifice."

But the manner of offering and the object of the Sacrifice alone differ :

(a) When our Divine Saviour died His violent death for our Redemption on the wood of the Cross, His sacred Body and Blood were separated with great pain. The same separation, we have already said, takes place in Holy Mass, but without shedding of blood. By the words of consecration the bread of the host is changed at that solemn moment into Christ's sacred Body, resplendent with the infinite glory of heaven. Then the wine of sacrifice is consecrated, and in that instant the Precious Blood of Jesus is present, just as it flows in His sacred glorified Body. Christ then is present, Christ our Lord and our God !

This double Consecration would actually separate the sacred Body from the Blood, were it now possible, just as real separation took place at our Lord's death on the Cross. But Christ, being risen from the dead, is divided no more. Neither separation nor suffering affect Him, and His sacred Body and Blood remain for ever indissolubly united.

Thus the effect of the sacred words of consecration, pronounced over the two elements of sacrifice, is the presence on our altars of the Body and Blood of Christ under two distinct forms. However, by an inner and indissoluble union of both substances in the one living and indivisible Christ, the Blood is united by concomitance with the Body, and the Body is one with the Blood. Thus Christ abides in the midst of His sinful creatures, and in Him dwell both Body and Soul, Humanity and Divinity, Omnipotence, Beauty, and Goodness. He, who is seated at the right hand of His Father in heavenly glory, also reposes on our altars, although His presence here on earth is not outwardly shown forth with the glory of heaven.

However much the external appearances—the species which conceal Christ from bodily eyes—are divided and multiplied in Holy Mass, however great the number of those who feed on His sacred Flesh and Blood, be they many or few, Christ gives Himself for all undivided, whole in the whole host, whole in every part.

Thus the Sacrifice which our priests daily offer is the commemoration, without shedding of blood, of the first Sacrifice, offered for us on the hill of Calvary by Jesus Christ Himself in agonising pain.

(b) The object of the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross was the redemption of mankind. This was effected by Christ's act of infinite worth, which satisfied

Divine justice for the sins of the world and discharged the debt of sin. And since Christ has fully attained this object once and for all by His sufferings and death, the end of the Mass must be of a different nature to that of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Hence :

(1) It will be to the end of time a lasting memorial and perpetuation of the redeeming death of Jesus.

(2) It applies the merits of His Oblation on the Cross to our poor souls.

The Jews had a variety of sacrifices : but far more than they could do by so many sacrifices can we do in the Mass.

(a) It is a sacrifice of adoration, an act of infinite homage paid to the Sovereign Majesty. It offers by the hands of the priest to God the Father His own beloved Son.

(b) It is a sacrifice of thanksgiving for all spiritual and temporal graces and benefits.

(c) It is a sacrifice of propitiation, obtaining forgiveness of venial faults and release from the punishment due to them. It cancels the debt of punishment due to mortal sins already forgiven, and secures for us from the goodness of God the grace of a sincere conversion from sin.

(d) Lastly, it is a sacrifice of impetration, winning for us the graces and favours, temporal and spiritual, that we need both for ourselves and others. It obtains for departed souls that deliverance from Purgatory for which they so ardently yearn.

Since the Son of God deigns to be both the Minister and the Victim in the Sacrifice of the New Law, the merits dispensed in Holy Mass are of infinite value. Nevertheless, they are applied in a finite manner ; they are dependent on God's good will, and are in proportion to the faith and

piety of the faithful. This should induce Catholics to assist at the Divine Sacrifice with ardent faith and tender devotion, remembering that the Church wishes them to be offerers with the priest, and so to reap full benefit from the Holy Sacrifice.

The fruits of Holy Mass, whether spiritual or temporal, are either general or particular.

(a) In general the Holy Sacrifice benefits the whole Church, because the offering is made in the name of the whole Church, both living and dead, for all form one body in one Christ.

(b) The particular fruits of the Mass apply :

(1) to the priest who offers the Sacrifice ;

(2) to the persons for whose intention Holy Mass is offered ;

(3) to all the faithful who are present at the Sacrifice as offerers with the priest, especially those who have the Mass offered and those who serve at the altar.

Later on we shall point out the application of the Church's teaching on the Mass. The present explanation will be more than sufficient to kindle in the hearts of thinking Catholics a sincere love for the God of incomparable glory who has deigned to remain for ever with us on our altars in such a lowly form.

Space forbids any attempt to enumerate all the marvels of divine power which liturgists have discovered in the Mass. Suffice it to mention briefly a few of the wonders of God's infinite goodness therein, as unfolded in the writings of the Fathers :

(a) Christ's humility ! The Son of God conceals the splendour and glory of His Divinity, hides even the beauty of His Human Nature !

(b) Christ's obedience ! A few words from the priest, be he saint or sinner, suffice to bring God

from heaven on our altars, to be received by His faithful people in Holy Communion.

(c) Christ's patience! For Jesus meekly bears with the ingratitude of men, their indifference, lukewarmness, irreverence; nay, more, even sacrilegious and violent hands may be laid upon Him, and He will not resist.

(d) Christ's love! He ever remains in our midst,¹ in spite of endless and unfathomable humiliations: He longs to gain access to the hearts of those who have offended Him so often by sin.

In Holy Mass Christ's divine magnificence and power have, as it were, disappeared. The human eye can perceive neither divine splendour nor even any exterior human form, for Christ's intention is that a perfect Oblation should be made to His Heavenly Father. God, indeed, becomes, as it were, nothing, that He might be all things to all.

"He has concealed His Divinity on the Cross," says St. Thomas, the angelic Doctor, "but on our altars He has concealed even His Humanity."

And this wonder of Divine Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Love is repeated day after day, all the world over, as often as Holy Mass is celebrated. The Church is thus enabled to live in the perpetual presence of her Divine Founder, her Saviour and her Lord. He stands between heaven and earth, a propitiatory Sacrifice, to bear the weight of divine justice and human sin. Thus the word of prophecy is realised: "From the rising of the sun, even to the going down, My name is great amongst the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and

¹ As there are about 200,000 Catholic priests in the world, two or three priests ascend every minute to the altar.

there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (Mal. 1:11).

Thus does Almighty God fulfil the ancient promise, and the worship of Christians and Catholics perfects the religion of Israel, the chosen people of God.



MONOGRAMS OF THE SAVIOUR'S CROSS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF
CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER II

THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS

CEREMONIES help to express the beauty of the Divine Sacrifice. The term is used to denote the series of solemn functions which the Church performs in the exercise of public worship. They are intended to symbolise Catholic beliefs. For instance, when the priest genuflects before the Blessed Sacrament, he visibly signifies an interior act of adoration offered to the Divine Majesty.

When signs or emblems are adopted by the Church to serve the same purpose, they are called symbols.

The branch of science which undertakes, amongst other subjects, the explanation of ceremonies and symbols is termed symbolism.

Ceremonies, symbols, actions, in short, solemn functions of every description, come under the head of public religious worship or liturgy. Should a form of liturgy, however, be confined to the ecclesiastical practices common amongst a particular group of persons—a particular country, for instance, or a particular order—it is then known as a rite.

This explanation of a few terms, which constantly occur in the course of this book, will be sufficient for our purpose.

We may now pass to an exposition of the ceremonies prescribed by Holy Church during the Divine Sacrifice.

The ceremonies of Holy Mass are full of meaning. They are, as it were, an accompaniment precisely ordered by the Church and hallowed by usage; at times they are the faithful expression of liturgical speech. The ceremonies of Holy Mass are something like the free delivery of an eloquent preacher, excepting that the Church prescribes her ceremonies and merely countenances delivery. How can our innermost feelings help finding expression in appropriate outward form?

Thus ecclesiastical ceremonies outwardly represent the innermost devotion of the worshipper. Like the liturgical chant, or the recital of the office in choir, like the liturgy as a whole, they are a visible and eloquent manifestation of the life which fills the solemnities of the Church.

However, many souls, through custom and carelessness, regard these significant actions as so many meaningless and lifeless forms, to the great detriment of true piety. Yet a trained, attentive mind will see in every ceremony, and in every liturgical action, a symbolical representation or fitting accompaniment of words or chant.

To form an idea of the symbolical character of these liturgical functions, we need only follow the priest at the altar. Before going up the steps, he stands at the foot of the altar, for as a sinner he feels that he is unworthy to ascend to this second calvary as the representative of Christ. Fully conscious of his unworthiness, he openly confesses it, and bows his head, like the publican, in token of sorrow, accusing himself in an audible voice before God and man, and humbly smiting his breast.

Then he begins the liturgical prayers (the Collects), but not before turning to the people and exhorting them to join in the Church's prayer,

extending his arms in an attitude of supplication, like another Moses praying for his people. When he speaks of "washing his hands among the innocent," he simultaneously carries out the liturgical ablutions before the people. At the offering of bread and wine to God, the whole assembly witness the actual oblation, though they may not hear the words which accompany it. At the consecration the priest describes in words the Last Supper, and repeats the actions of God made man. Christ took bread, he says, himself taking the bread. Christ blessed the bread, raised His eyes to heaven, thanked His Heavenly Father, and uttered the divine words: "This is My Body." We know that the priest is repeating all this in descriptive language, and we see him, while pronouncing the words, performing the appropriate actions. Again he humbly bows down before God when saying the prayer, "We most humbly beseech Thee"; he strikes his breast when interceding for himself and "for us sinners"; he gives the kiss of peace during the prayer for peace.

The same principle is applied throughout the whole Mass; that is to say, all the ceremonies of the Mass are a perfect adjustment between the words, either spoken or sung, and the accompanying liturgical actions, which are their faithful expression.

That the Church is here actuated by no other motive than an ardent desire to foster among her children a true spirit of piety when assisting at the holiest of all actions, needs no explanation. She has drawn up a ceremonial, as she herself teaches us, "that the majesty of so great a sacrifice may be enhanced, and that the minds of the faithful by these visible signs of devotion may be stirred up to the contemplation of the deep mysteries which

lie hid in this sacrifice" (Council of Trent, sess. 22, c. 5).

The relation between words and ceremonies has been determined by the Church ; but the relation itself is not always direct.

(a) Some ceremonies of their nature faithfully correspond with the words. To this class belong all postures of the body, such as : standing, sitting, kneeling, adoration on both knees, genuflecting, profound and slight inclinations of the body, raising the eyes, extending the arms, striking the breast.

(b) Other actions are merely symbolical, such as : signs of the Cross, washing of hands, censuring, sprinkling with holy water, blessing the oblation of bread and wine, kissing the altar, mixing the wine and water, extending the hands over the oblation, breaking the host and dropping a particle into the chalice.

This enumeration gives us the division of the chief ceremonies of the Mass, and we can now proceed briefly to explain them.

Our leading principle is as follows : the Sacrifice of Holy Mass is the clean oblation of the New Law, the perpetuation of Christ's immolation on Calvary. All its ceremonies and prayers, and particularly those of the celebrant himself, derive their origin from this dogmatic truth.

(a) As representative of Christ, the first Divine Offerer, the celebrant's actions (ceremonies) are the actions of our Redeemer.

(b) But, besides this, ceremonies symbolise the Church's own act of adoration as a reparation for the contumely with which the Jews treated the "Man of Sorrows." The following liturgical actions are to be understood in this sense :

STANDING ERECT

(a) To stand erect denotes amongst all races an act of reverence shown to persons of higher rank, therefore to Him who is "throned in bliss." To be seated¹ on a throne was on the contrary, also amongst the Jews, a sign of authority.

It is customary to stand during the Gospel, "the Word of the Lord"; during the Magnificat, Mary's song of triumph; at the Benedictus; and during the Te Deum.

(b) It further implies that Christians are the servants of Him who once rose from the tomb of death and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father in everlasting glory. St. Augustine rightly says: "All we who pray are but beggars in the presence of God, and stand before the throne of the Almighty Father of the Christian family."

INCLINATIONS

Inclinations are an expression of sincere sorrow for sin, and indicate that we are conscious of the punishment incurred. The priest, for instance, begins the Mass with the *Confiteor*, a self-accusation, which is fully expressed in the profound inclination and striking of the breast which accompany the words. These manifestations of humility—the profound and slight inclinations—typify the spirit which should animate the priest, and at the same time symbolise the meekness and obedience of Christ's bitter Passion.

¹ Sitting in churches was extremely rare in olden times even during the sermon; it was only tolerated in cases of sickness or weakness. People knelt or stood in the temple of the Lord. High dignitaries, the Bishop, for instance, alone had the right to a seat, hence the expression: "See of St. Peter," "of St. Mark," &c. (*cf.* Greek churches to this day).

BOWING OF THE HEAD

We further show respect, but in a minor degree, by an inclination of the head, when saying the *Gloria Patri*, pronouncing the name of Jesus, or that of Mary, mentioning the names of particular Saints, especially that of the Saint whose feast we keep, and in serving Mass at a side-altar when we pass before the Cross which represents Calvary.

GENUFLEXIONS

To bend the knee was already, in the Jewish and pagan ceremonial, a mark of the highest respect. It denotes, in the liturgy of the Church, an act of divine adoration offered to Him, whom we know to be really present under the sacramental veils. We sink down to the earth, says St. Honorius, because we adore Christ in the flesh. This liturgical action is prescribed when entering and leaving the church, a few times during Mass, during the *Credo*, and at the mention of Christ's Incarnation in the last Gospel.

RAISING THE EYES

This action symbolises :

(a) The longing desire for our Father who is in Heaven, our trust in Him, and our love for Him. We therefore look up to Him as our Saviour taught us.

(b) Or, as the ceremonial of the Church seems to imply more than once, we raise our eyes to the Cross above the tabernacle, upon which Christ is exalted for the salvation of mankind.

EXTENDING THE ARMS

Outstretched arms denote a pressing entreaty for help from on high. It was the attitude of Moses, when praying during Joshua's fight with the Amalekites, and it was adopted not only by the Israelites but even by heathen nations, as the monuments of Egypt, Etruria, and Rome sufficiently show.

In an exclusively Christian sense, however, this action is, according to St. Ambrose, a mystical figure of our Saviour praying for the world's redemption, with arms outstretched upon the painful Cross.

This attitude, formerly so common in private devotions,¹ is prescribed by the liturgy during the recital of the Collects, the Preface, and Canon. "We Christians," says Tertullian, "pray with eyes raised to heaven and uplifted hands, because they are pure. We are not satisfied with raising our hands, we even extend our arms in memory of the Lord's Passion."

This symbolical action is more particularly noticeable in the *Dominus vobiscum*² (The Lord be with you), and in the *Oremus* (Let us pray) which follows. The priest then extends his arms and immediately joins his hands again.

(a) This particular extension of hands signifies the communication of God's blessing, or, according to another opinion, it marks an earnest desire of being heard. The joining of hands adds a note of humility to the attitude of prayer.

¹ Prayer with outstretched hands gradually declined, with the sanction of the Church, so far as the public prayer of the laity was concerned. It is now practised only in the oratory or in the cell of the religious.

² This ceremonial prayer, which is repeated eight times, is the Christian form of an Old Testament salutation. The *Oremus* precedes all the chief prayers, and is a constant reminder for the people present to join still more closely in the Mass.

(*b*) In a more figurative sense this ceremony is a symbol of union. It is as if the priest visibly united in his own prayer the diverse petitions and supplications of the faithful present at Mass, like the angel of the Apocalypse (Ap. 8:3), who gathers the prayers of the Saints and presents them before the throne of God.

(*c*) According to another opinion, this symbolical action denotes the union of all brothers in the Faith who are present, through the bonds of charity, before they address in one common prayer Him who is our Father.

A less expressive form of the same ceremony is

THE JOINING OF HANDS

It symbolises the mind's fixed attention and the helplessness of the creature, who stands powerless and bound by the chain of sin in the presence of his Creator. The fingers point to Heaven: a symbol of the *Sursum corda* (Lift up your hearts).

STRIKING THE BREAST

This action is an Old Testament reminiscence, and denotes humble self-accusation and voluntary self-chastisement; it further shows the person himself as a culprit against God. This explains its use at the *Confiteor*, the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* (And to us sinners), the *Agnus Dei* (O Lamb of God), and the *Domine non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy).

LITURGICAL SIGNS OF THE CROSS

Our fathers rightly attached the greatest importance to the sign of the Cross, made, according to the Latin form, on the forehead, breast, and

shoulders. They recognised its value in daily life, just as the Church did in her worship :

(a) For the sign of the Cross is a summary of several mysteries of divine faith. It is more particularly an external profession of the Church's teaching on the truths of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Passion and Death of Christ. It is an open confession that the Cross is the salvation of the Christian soul, and it is an expression of our ardent desire to be delivered from our spiritual enemies through this holy sign.

(b) It further symbolises an act of consecration, for it marks us with the seal of Christ. The martyrs of old crossed themselves before sealing their faith with their blood. The Christian soldier made the sign of the Cross before the battle, and we Christians, says Tertullian, are accustomed to cross ourselves before any important work.

(c) The sign of the Cross has in itself an important signification, but symbolism gives it a deeper and wider meaning, especially in its relation to the liturgy of the Mass. The sign of the Cross is repeated two, three, and five times in succession, to symbolise either Christ's twofold nature, human and divine, or the Blessed Trinity, or the five precious wounds of our Lord. In short, it typifies the mysteries of the Faith which the Mass commemorates.

Further, the sign of the Cross, which we find so often repeated—it is made twenty-five times in the Canon alone—has a different meaning according to its use before or after the consecration, because it is then either made over the oblation or is directed to our Saviour present under the sacred species.

(d) In the first case, whenever the celebrant crosses himself, blesses the people or the oblations, it is the ordinary form of benediction, because the

very nature of a blessing is that it should be given to creatures. But, after the consecration, the idea of blessing the Body and Blood of the Lord, and therefore God Himself, is absolutely repugnant. The meaning, therefore, must be quite different.

(*e*) This symbol, then, in the words of St. Thomas, recalls Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross and its perpetuation in the Mass.

(*f*) Or according to another opinion, it is a symbol of faith, a profession in symbolical form of the Church's doctrine that, in the Mass, Christ crucified is present as Priest and Victim.

(*g*) A still deeper meaning is attached to the blessing imparted with the host itself. Just as the priest, Durandus explains, draws down actively God's blessing upon the sacrifice by his own sign of the Cross before the consecration, so now he humbly begs, by the virtue of this self-same sign, to be made partaker of the blessing of Christ crucified.

There is a close relation between the larger sign of the Cross and the smaller one—probably the oldest type of the Roman Cross—which is formed on the forehead, mouth, and breast, and is still made before the reading of the Gospel at Mass. This Cross, the "Gospel Cross," denotes that we bear the Gospel in our mind, confess it with our lips, and love it with our hearts.

WASHING OF HANDS

This ceremony is older than Christianity. It symbolises the interior and moral purity which the offerers must possess when offering sacrifice with consecrated hands, and before receiving within themselves the God of all purity.

CENSING

Censing is a mark of respect shown to consecrated persons and sacred objects.

In the Old Law incense was sacred to the Lord. An ardent flame consumes the grains of incense, and fragrant clouds of smoke ascend to God as a pleasing odour.

Censing, then, symbolises the inner spirit of sacrifice and a petition acceptable to God. Especially has it this meaning when it has been previously blessed during Mass, thus becoming a sacramental.

The meaning, however, attached to censing differs according to the circumstances.

(a) When offered to the Blessed Sacrament it is an act of adoration; it is offered as a mark of respect to relics or the Gospel book.

(b) The oblations or the celebrant are censed as bearers of our prayers: when assistant ministers or the laity (as in High Mass) are censed, this is to arouse them to fervent prayer.

THE ASPERGES

is the first word of the Psalm: *Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor* (Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop and I shall be cleansed). A bunch of hyssop, a sweet-smelling plant, was used in the Jewish liturgy as an aspersion to sprinkle the people with the blood of the victims of sacrifice. This ceremony signified cleansing from sin. The same meaning is attached to the *Asperges* of the Church, when the priest sprinkles the people with holy water.

This ceremony has some affinity with the custom of olden days, common even amongst the laity, of washing the hands before Church solemnities as a

symbol of the purity required. Very old canonical regulations even ordered Christians to wash their hands whenever they prayed.¹

An explanation of the purpose and meaning of other more symbolical ceremonies, such as kissing the altar, the offertory, the mixing of wine and water, extending the hands over the oblations, breaking the host and putting a particle of the host into the chalice, will be given when describing the ceremonies of the Mass in the next chapter.

¹ This seems an instinct of natural religion. It may be seen in the East among Mahommedans before they enter a mosque.



XIITH CENTURY PORTABLE ALTAR, WITH IVORY BAS-RELIEFS

CHAPTER III

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

I. INTRODUCTION

IN Holy Mass we reach the heart of Catholic worship. For the Mass is a Sacrifice of infinite value, offering God the Father the infinite merits of the Passion of His Divine Son. But the application of these merits is contingent: it is conditioned by the free will of God, and is in proportion to the faith and devotion and capacity of those who assist as true offerers with the priest. We might say with St. Augustine, "The ocean may be boundless, but no one draws more water from it than his vessel will hold."

We are then acting according to the true spirit of the Church when we assist at Mass,¹ fully conscious of our participation in the Sacrifice, and when we follow its celebration with fervour and devotion, and consider it as *our* Sacrifice offered up by the hands of the officiating priest.

Would that all the faithful were imbued with this Christian idea and assisted at Mass in this spirit!

¹ A probable explanation of the word "Mass" is that it is a derivation from the Latin word *missio* (dismissal). It recalls the two solemn dismissals in the liturgy: first, of the catechumens and public sinners, before the Offertory (for they were forbidden to be present after the Gospel); next, of all the faithful, who were dismissed at the end of the service, the same words which the deacon now uses being said: "Ite, missa est" ("Go, the Mass is ended"). Since the days of Pope Gregory the Great (604), the word "Mass" has replaced all other names given to the Divine Sacrifice.

What abundant fruits would their devotion gain! But too many, untrained as they are in mental prayer, find it difficult to fix their attention at all, because they are ignorant of the meaning of the Church's liturgy.

Prayers, often not at all in harmony with the sacred action which is going on, private devotions and spiritual reading, are but imperfect substitutes for full participation in the Divine Sacrifice which is offered up for *all* on our altars; and to be ignorant of the possibility of this participation only adds to our reproach.

The fundamental idea in the liturgy of the Mass is the union of priest and faithful. In the first ages the prayer of the priest alternated with that of the people; at present the server takes the place of the faithful and makes the responses. Hence the various answers, Amen,¹ *Christe eleïson* (Christ have

¹ These formulas of liturgical prayer (*acclamationes*) are taken almost exclusively from the Old Testament, their application being slightly modified. They were often loving ejaculations in daily use amongst the first Christians.

The Hebrew word *Amen* signifies, "So be it; In truth." Our Divine Lord and the Apostles John and Paul often make use of it. The same language has given us the word *Alleluia* (Praise the Lord). It was the canticle of joy and the song of triumph which Israel sung, and which is still found in several Psalms, chiefly in Ps. 113-118, which form the great "Hallel" (Alleluia). The development of the Alleluia in the Church's liturgy is a poem in itself, says Cardinal Pitra in his treatise on hymnology.

Dominus vobiscum (The Lord be with you) is the Latin translation of the oft-repeated Hebrew expression, Emmanuel. It was an old form of salutation amongst the Jewish people, and was adopted with this meaning and in the additional sense of a blessing in the New Testament and in the liturgy. The Church introduced *Et cum spiritu tuo* (And with thy spirit) in the ritual as the reply to this greeting.

The *Kyrie Eleïson* (Lord have mercy on us) is one of the oldest Greek forms in the original service of the Church. It is the prayer, the reiterated prayer, of a soul in anguish. In its present form it is merely a summary of the litanies which commonly belonged in early ages to the liturgy, but which are now heard only at fixed periods during the ecclesiastical year.

Deo Gratias (Thanks be to God) is taken from St. Paul's first

mercy on us), *Et cum spiritu tuo* (And with thy spirit), *Deo gratias* (Thanks be to God), are merely the liturgical replies given in the name of all to the exhortation of the priest, counselling humility in prayer, attention, Christian joy, and gratitude. In fact, the Mass, like all the ceremonies of the Church, is an ever-recurring exchange of holy wishes between the Church and her children, between all the members of the one mystical body who share in the same breaking of bread.

For a better understanding of the ritual of Holy Mass we add the two following considerations :

(a) The prayers are inspired by the two main ideas which are manifest in the Mass : Christ is the Victim of Sacrifice and Christ is the food of our souls. First, the self-oblation of Christ is perpetuated under the form of bread and wine, in consecration ; secondly, the soul is prepared for a worthy reception of the heavenly Food.

(b) Moreover, the prayers are constantly alternating : they are either petitions for grace, or thanksgiving for favours received. Both, however, bear an intimate relation to the Holy Sacrifice.

The liturgy, with its wonderful system of prayers and ceremonies, is governed by fixed ecclesiastical laws. The most important form of the Divine Office is the Roman rite, which needs some further explanation.

Jesus Christ not only instituted the Blessed Sacrament, but is Himself the Divine Victim and Minister in every Mass. The first Eucharistic Sacrifice was offered up in the room of the Last

Epistle to the Corinthians (15 : 57) : "Thanks be to God, who hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." These words were repeated in daily life by the early Christians, and thus easily became part of Catholic worship. They were used in token of gratitude, as a form of salutation, and a means of recognition. They even served as a name, and a watchword in battle.

Supper. There was a close connection between this Oblation and the Paschal meal of the Old Law, but the latter was but a lifeless shadow of the reality present in the sacrifice of love consummated by our Lord.

The sacramental action thus performed by the Divine Master in its essential elements was the model for all celebrations of the Mass as offered up during the missionary journeys of His disciples. If at a later date the Church added ceremonies, prayers, psalms, and chants, the differences which arose did not affect the essence of the rite, though they became legal, and a part of the liturgy.

The various parts of the Holy Sacrifice, which are common to the different liturgies, can all be traced back to one original apostolic and traditional method of celebrating. These parts include the chief divisions of the Mass: the preparatory prayers, the lessons from Scripture, the Psalms, the offering of wine mixed with water, the commemoration of the living and the dead, the oblation, the consecration, the *Pater Noster*, the signs of the Cross, the kiss of peace, the breaking of the host, the communion of the priest and people, and the act of thanksgiving.

Although every priest, whenever and wherever he celebrates, follows essentially the same method, still the order of the Mass and its phraseology are governed by circumstances of time and place. Consequently different vestments are used, different prayers are said, and various rubrics observed. Hence we have different forms of liturgy.

The liturgy of the Mass has two main divisions, the ritual of the East and that of the West. The former is more developed, but the prayers alternate less, and its words and actions are more symbolical. The Western is more expressive and concise. Its

very soberness and comparative lack of symbolism add to its grandeur.

The Western Ritual comprises the Mozarabic,¹ the ancient Gallican, the Ambrosian, and the Roman² rites. The last named is the oldest and most esteemed, and is now almost exclusively³ used in the Roman Church.

To sum up : the essential elements and principal parts of the Divine Sacrifice have been instituted for our benefit by our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ. The essential form of the Mass descends from the ancient apostolic method of celebrating. Pope Innocent traces the Roman rite, which is now generally in use, back to the days of St. Peter.

How consoling it is to read the description of Holy Mass given by St. Justin, the great convert and traveller, the preacher and martyr of the Faith. We then realise that our Fathers in the Faith gained strength to face the death which then ever hung over them from the self-same Sacrifice as is offered up now every day on our altars.

The accidental differences which arise from the introduction of ceremonies show that a strong current of life flows in the Church's veins, and also the providential care of Almighty God. For the Sacrifice of the Mass has preserved its unity and integrity through all the circumstances of

¹ Also called Gothico-Spanish rite, or rite of St. Isidore, or of Toledo, a liturgy in use in Spain in the eighth century.

² The oldest monuments of the Roman liturgy are the three Sacramentaries of Pope Leo I. (440-461), Gelasius I. (492-496), and Gregory I. (590-604). Our Roman Missal comes chiefly from the last Sacramentary. When the Gregorian rite tended to degenerate through inconsiderate fervour and private additions, Pius V., Clement VIII., and Urban VIII. brought it back once for all to its original form.

³ Milan retains the Ambrosian rite, Toledo (Corpus Christi Chapel) the Mozarabic.

time and place, independently of custom, language, and nationality.

We are directly concerned with the Roman rite of Holy Mass, a rite which has remained unchanged since the days of Gregory the Great. An explanation of its ceremonies and a translation of its prayers will enable us to appreciate better the liturgical and symbolical meaning of the divine mystery of our altars.

II. ORDINARY OF THE MASS

St. Thomas gives a twofold division of the Mass : the "Preparation" of the Holy Sacrifice, and its "Completion." We shall retain this division, changing only the names to the *Preparation of the Offerers*, and the *Action of Sacrifice*.

The first part of the Mass is devoted to the instruction of the faithful, and so presents variations in the prayers. The second part is the real union of the offerers with the Sacrifice of our Lord, and the prayers remain practically unchanged.

I. The *Preparation of the Offerers* is an Introduction to the Holy Sacrifice. In the first ages of the Church it was called the Mass of Catechumens, because the neophytes and public sinners were compelled to leave the Church at its conclusion, that is, at the end of the Gospel, and could only assist at the rest of the Mass from behind closed doors. This regulation was a precaution in the case of the neophytes : it safeguarded with secrecy the things in the liturgy held most sacred by Christians living in a pagan atmosphere. For public sinners it was a form of penance.

This preparation consists of liturgical lessons (the Epistle, Gospel, Prophecies) ; chants (Introit, Gradual, Tract, Alleluia, Gloria in Excelsis) ; and

prayers (Kyrie, Collects). These different parts of the Mass are quite independent of the Sacrifice proper, and serve as an introduction to it.

II. The *Action of Sacrifice* is the Sacrifice proper, or the Mass of the Faithful (*Missa Fidelium*). This is a development of the three principal acts of sacrifice: the Offertory, Consecration, and Communion of the Priest.

The Offertory is the oblation of bread and wine to God. The Consecration, the central point or "heart of the Canon," to use the words of Peter Damian, is the mysterious changing of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord. The Communion is the partaking of the Sacrifice by the priest, the consummation of the Sacrifice.

We may now pass on to the development of these different subdivisions of the Mass.

I. THE PREPARATION OF THE OFFERERS

(*The Mass of Catechumens*)

I. ALTERNATE PRAYERS

The central mystery of our Faith, which perpetuates the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, begins with the sign of the Cross,¹ which summarises the chief mysteries of the Christian religion. The priest stands at the foot of the altar, longing to ascend its steps. He appropriately recites the 42nd Psalm of David, a psalm in which the King-Prophet, persecuted by his son Absalom, also sighs

¹ The blessing is given with holy water on Sundays before the High Mass. The antiphon, *Asperges me* or *Vidi aquam* (from Easter to Pentecost) is then sung. The symbolical meaning of this ceremony has already been explained.

for the day when he may ascend to the temple of the Lord :

*P.*¹ In nomine Patris et Filii
et Spiritus sancti.

S. Amen.

P. Introibo ad altare Dei.

S. Ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

P. Judica me Deus et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta ; ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me.

S. Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo mea ; quare me repulisti et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus ?

P. Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam ; ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum et in tabernacula tua.

S. Et introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum, qui lætificat juventutem meam.

P. Confitebor tibi in cithara Deus, Deus meus ; quare tristis es, anima mea ? et quare conturbas me ?

S. Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi ; salutare vultus mei et Deus meus.

P. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto ;

S. Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

P. Introibo ad altare Dei.

S. Ad Deum, qui lætificat juventutem meam.

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

S. Amen.

P. I will go unto the altar of God.

S. To God, who gives joy to my youth.

P. Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy : deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

S. For Thou art my strength, O God ; why hast Thou cast me off ? and why do I go sorrowful, whilst the enemy afflicteth me ?

P. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth ; they have conducted me and brought me unto Thy holy mount and into Thy tabernacles.

S. And I will go unto the altar of God : to God, who giveth joy to my youth.

P. I will praise Thee on the harp, O God, my God ; why art thou sorrowful, O my soul ? and why dost thou disquiet me ?

S. Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him : the salvation of my countenance and my God.

P. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

S. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. I will go unto the altar of God.

S. To God, who giveth joy to my youth.

Then realising his powerlessness, the priest implores the help of the Most High :

P. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domine.

S. Qui fecit cælum et terram.

P. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

S. Who made heaven and earth.

¹ The letter *P* stands for Priest ; *S* for Server.

After the example of the publican, whose prayer for mercy ascended to God's throne, the priest humbly bows down, for, in the presence of the Almighty, man is but dust and ashes. He knows that no living thing is of itself justified in the eyes of the Lord; he therefore confesses his guilt with sentiments of deep humility, thrice striking his breast, to symbolise the threefold source of sin: thought, word, and deed. Turning to Mary, the refuge of sinners, and to all God's dear Saints, he implores their aid, for the innocent in hands and clean of heart alone shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, that is, to the sacred altar (Ps. 23: 3, 4).

This confession of the priest is followed by that of the people. The words are spoken by the server, but the confession is made in the name of the faithful, whose character of offerers with the priest the liturgy of the Mass constantly emphasises. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds" (Eccl. 35: 21).

Animated with these sentiments, the priest begins his

2. CONFITEOR¹

P. Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis, et vobis, fratres, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere, mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanc-

P. I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints, and to you, brethren, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Arch-

¹ This form of the *Confiteor*, with some slight modifications, has been in use since the eighth century. Other forms, however, are found, which date from the earliest ages. The psalm "Judica" was introduced into the Mass in the twelfth century.

tos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum,
omnes Sanctos, et vos, fratres,
orare pro me ad Dominum Deum
nostrum.

angel, blessed John the Baptist,
the holy Apostles Peter and Paul,
and all the Saints, and you, brethren,
to pray to the Lord our God
for me.

In reply the server says the *Confiteor* in the name of the faithful who are present, and then the priest implores the mercy of God on behalf of the faithful:

P. Misereatur vestri omnipotens
Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris
perducat vos ad vitam æternam.

S. Amen.

P. May Almighty God have
mercy on you, and forgive you
your sins, and bring you to life
everlasting.

S. Amen.

The priest next prays as follows on behalf of himself and the people:

P. Indulgentiam, absolutionem,
et remissionem peccatorum nos-
trorum tribuat nobis omnipotens
et misericors Dominus.

S. Amen.

P. Deus tu conversus vivificabis
nos.

S. Et plebs tua lætabitur in te.

P. Ostende nobis, Domine,
misericordiam tuam.

S. Et salutare tuum da nobis.

P. Domine, exaudi orationem
meam.

S. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

P. Dominus vobiscum.

S. Et cum spiritu tuo.

P. Oremus.

P. May the almighty and mer-
ciful Lord grant us pardon, absolu-
tion, and remission of our sins.

S. Amen.

P. Thou wilt turn again, O
God, and quicken us.

S. And Thy people will rejoice
in Thee.

P. Show us, O Lord, Thy
mercy.

S. And grant us Thy salvation.

P. O Lord, hear my prayer.

S. And let my cry come unto
Thee.

P. The Lord be with you.

S. And with thy spirit.

P. Let us pray.

It is only after these repeated protestations of his own unworthiness that the priest, relying on his dignity of anointed of the Lord, ascends to the altar, to the Calvary of the Crucified, as mystics call it. His prayer is:

P. Aufer a nobis, quæsumus Domine, iniquitates nostras; ut ad sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

P. Take away from us our iniquities, we beseech Thee, O Lord; that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the holy of holies; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

He then kisses the altar, or rather the sepulchre which encloses the relics of the Saints¹ now triumphant in heaven. His kiss shows his veneration and love for them, and his confidence in their intercession. To them he now turns:

P. Oramus te Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum quorum reliquæ hic sunt et omnium Sanctorum: ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Amen.

P. We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy Saints whose relics are here, and of all the Saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins. Amen.

The priest has just kissed the altar out of reverence. This action is closely linked with the deep symbolical sense attached by the Church to the altar itself, a sense which was not unknown to the Jews.

In Israel, the altar was the centre of religious worship. It was the raised place where God's gifts were offered. Noah built an altar on leaving the ark; Abraham prepared the sacrifice of his beloved son on an altar; Sinai was the altar of Moses' sacrifice; Joshua offered a sacrifice in thanksgiving for his victory over Hai; the three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, never relaxed in their efforts to raise an altar worthy of Jehovah. And the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up his teaching on this point in these words: "We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" (Heb. 13: 10).

¹ The ancient Christian custom was to celebrate Mass over the tombs of the Martyrs, and when this became impossible, over their relics, which were kept in the sepulchre of the altar.

In regard to size and manner of construction, altars are of various kinds, but they all bear the same symbolical interpretation, and this we may explain in a few words.

There should be a Cross with the figure of our crucified Redeemer on the altar, in order that both priest and laity may not lose sight of the fact that the Mass is the mysterious commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice of expiation. Three steps lead up to the altar, representing the three divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, the three precious gifts of God which bring our souls into touch with Him, who descends on our altars during the Holy Sacrifice. The necessary candles for Mass must be of wax. These candles :

(a) Show homage to Him, who is the Light of the world (John 8 : 12), and announce His near approach in the solemn act of consecration.

(b) Typify the light which divine revelation has shed upon our souls.

(c) Symbolise the enlightenment of faith, the undying vigour of hope, and the consuming fire of charity.

(d) Recall the terrible days of persecution in the early Church, when in Rome, at any rate, priests were forced to celebrate the divine mysteries in dark catacombs.

The altar itself, or at least that portion of it upon which the Holy Sacrifice is offered, is made of stone. Symbolism saw in this table of stone a type of Mount Calvary and its rocky soil. But in a deeper, and to our minds, more mystical sense, the altar represents our Saviour Himself. The Roman Pontifical, in the exhortation which precedes the conferring of the subdiaconate, attaches this meaning to it. The entire ceremonial which the Church follows, when consecrating her altars,

abounds in references to her crucified Redeemer : five Crosses are cut in the stone, to symbolise the Five Wounds ; there are several anointings in memory of Him, who applied to Himself the ancient Scripture : "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor" (Luke 4 : 18 ; *cf.* Is. 61 : 1).

St. Ambrose, who is a great mystical writer, sums up the various opinions on this point when he says : "The altar of the Church is a type of the Lord's Body."

Thus when the priest kisses the altar, he offers directly an act of reverence to His Divine Master. Indirectly, however, he shows his respect for God's trusted servants, the Saints, whose relics are inclosed in the sepulchre of the altar.

Veneration of the Saints takes another form—at least in solemn Masses—when the priest offers incense immediately after kissing the altar.

The celebrant then begins the

3. INTROIT

The Introit is really an introductory prayer,¹ and consists of an antiphon, the verse of a psalm—formerly a whole psalm—and the *Gloria Patri*.² It is always in keeping with the ecclesiastical feast which the Church celebrates, and, since these feasts vary from day to day, the Introit itself is constantly changed.

Like the blind man of Jericho and the leper in the Gospel, calling on Christ for help, the priest

¹ This prayer in High Mass is intoned by the choir when the celebrant goes to the altar. As it begins the Mass, the first word of the Introit is taken as the name of several Sundays, as *Latare*, the 4th Sunday in Lent, *Gaudete*, the 3rd Sunday in Advent, &c.

² The *Gloria Patri* is omitted in Passion-tide.

redoubles his petitions. His prayer alternates with that of the people in invoking the aid of the Blessed Trinity. It is expressed in the words of the

4. KYRIE

Turning to God the Father he prays :

P. Kyrie¹ eleison !

S. Kyrie eleison !

P. Kyrie eleison !

P. Lord have mercy on us.

S. Lord have mercy on us.

P. Lord have mercy on us.

Invoking God the Son he says :

S. Christe eleison !

P. Christe eleison !

S. Christe eleison !

S. Christ have mercy on us.

P. Christ have mercy on us.

S. Christ have mercy on us.

He addresses God the Holy Ghost with the words :

P. Kyrie eleison !

S. Kyrie eleison !

P. Kyrie eleison !

P. Lord have mercy on us.

S. Lord have mercy on us.

P. Lord have mercy on us.

The threefold repetition of this prayer for help denotes :

(a) An act of adoration offered to each Person of the Blessed Trinity.

(b) A vehement desire to be delivered from the three evils of ignorance, sin, and punishment.

(c) A cry of the soul for mercy, when a prey to the nine principal sins ; or for help, when in spiritual affliction, as some writers explain.

(d) An act of adoration offered up in union with the nine choirs of angels, as others say.

¹ The *Kyrie* is all that now remains of the litanies which were formerly said. "Kyrie eleison" is the Greek form of the Latin "Domine miserere." Besides this Greek expression Hebrew words such as Amen, Alleluia, Sabaoth, Hosanna, form part of the liturgy. Mysticism thus finds in the Holy Sacrifice the three languages of the inscription on the Cross.

(e) The repeated sighs of patriarchs and prophets during the course of ages for the coming of the Lord.

May we not also see in this repetition a preparation of the heart for the hymn of adoration which follows? The Church feels her inadequacy of utterance, and cannot find words of adoration worthy of the unspeakable majesty of God.

She therefore unites her voice with that of the heavenly host of angels, and translates into earthly accents the song of triumph and incomparable beauty, which formerly was called the Angelic Hymn (*hymnus angelicus, doxologia major*), namely :

5. THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

This song of jubilee is the Church's hymn of praise to the Blessed Trinity, and in honour of the mystery of Redemption. Its opening verse was first sung at our Saviour's birth, and was afterwards spread throughout the whole world by the Church of Christ. It is repeated daily with heartfelt adoration and love at the mysterious birth of our Lord on our altars.

The Church cannot but thank God for the manifestation of His glory in His creatures. She turns to God the Father and Creator, to God the Son, the Redeemer, recapitulating in this hymn all the glorious titles of her Divine Founder. Her praise strikes a note of jubilee when giving thanks over and over again to Him "who taketh away the sins of the world." An invocation of the Holy Ghost closes this song of angels and men in praise¹ of the most adorable Trinity.

¹ Because it is a hymn of praise, the *Gloria in Excelsis* is not said on days of mourning, such as the Sundays in Advent and Lent, in Masses of the Dead, and the Feast of the Holy Innocents, &c.

According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, the *Gloria in Excelsis* was

The priest intones the *Gloria* with hands upraised, and often reverently bows his head during its recital. All these actions are but the symbolical expression of the deep sense of the words :

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te; benedicimus te; adoramus te; glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee; we bless Thee; we adore Thee; we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy. Thou only art the Lord. Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

This hymn of praise throws into relief the four principal ends of the Mass. For it is a hymn of adoration ("we adore Thee"), of thanksgiving ("we give Thee thanks"), of propitiation ("who takest away the sins of the world"), of supplication ("receive our prayers").

And now, with the soul full of the Spirit of God and prepared for Holy Mass, the Collects or Prayers are said for our manifold necessities; and they are offered up with the firm hope of being heard.

The priest therefore kisses the altar,¹ and turn- originally said only at Christmas. Pope Symmachus (A.D. 500) is believed to have ordered it to be sung on all festivals, and on all Sundays out of Advent and Lent.

¹ The priest always kisses the altar before turning to the people. This signifies that he imparts the kiss of peace to Christ, who is symbolised by the altar, before giving it to the people.

ing to the people, greets them with the salutation of the apostolic days :

Dominus vobiscum.

The Lord be with you.

Et cum spiritu tuo,

And with thy spirit,

the people answer, and all present their petitions to God in one common prayer :

Oremus.

Let us pray.

Then, stretching forth his hands to pray, and joining them again, to mark the humility of his supplication, or—in a more symbolical sense—to gather together the petitions of all present, the priest says the Church's public prayers :

6. THE COLLECTS

Although the Collects¹ follow the variations of the Ecclesiastical Calendar (*oratio festi*), or are suggested by the particular needs of the Church (*oratio imperata*), they are all²—in conformity with the precept and example of the Divine Master—directed to God the Father, whose power and majesty we venerate. But as it is the Apostle's wish that we should always pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Church terminates all her prayers with the same petition, although it may be expressed in five different ways. She begs from God a favourable hearing, through the merits of "Jesus Christ, our Lord."

To the principal collect, that of the feast of the

¹ As the Collects vary in every Mass, we do not give them here. Those who wish to know them may consult the Roman Missal, and the excellent Missal for the Laity (Burns & Oates), which contains all the Masses of the year.

² With very few exceptions which the Church has introduced since the Arian heresy, so that no one should hold the opinion that the Son cannot be invoked equally with the Father.

day, correspond the lessons of the day, the Epistle and Gospel. The Epistle symbolises the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles, and prepares the way for the Gospel, which is the true apostolate of the Lord. For since Holy Mass perpetuates the work of Redemption, presenting Christ to us under the sacramental veil, it is but natural that His divine teaching should be recalled indirectly in the Epistle, directly in the Gospel, before the Divine Master Himself becomes the object of our adoration.

The rubrics prescribe that the Epistle should be read at the right side (the south), the Gospel at the left side (the north) of the altar.¹ The altar is said in a mystical sense to face the east where the sun rises, as a type of Christ who is the Sun of Justice.

And this mystical orientation of churches suggests a further meaning. The reading of the Epistle (the south) as a preparation for the Gospel recalls the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews. When the latter rejected this teaching, the Apostles brought the divine message to the heathen, who are symbolised by the north, as St. Gregory tells us: "The dark, cold North is a figure of the heathen world; for idolatry has hardened their hearts, just as the cold has frozen the northern lands."

7. THE EPISTLE

A passage usually taken from the New Testament Epistles, chiefly from St. Paul's, or from

¹ The historical reason of this ceremony is that the liturgy is always guided by the functions observed at High Mass. The deacon's place was then on the left, where he read the Gospel from the "ambo," a kind of pulpit. The sub-deacon stood on the right, or in the middle. When the priest celebrated alone, he fulfilled the offices of both deacon and sub-deacon, and thus took the place of both.

the Acts of the Apostles, or more rarely from the Old Testament, forms the subject matter of the Epistle. Following the reading of the Epistle was a chant sung in alternate verses by the choir. The words are often taken from the Psalms, but they correspond with the office, and so vary from day to day. These chants are called, according to the season, Graduals, Alleluias, Tracts,¹ to which five times in the year is added a canticle called a Sequence.² These form the transition between the Epistle and Gospel.

While the Missal is being carried to the Gospel side, the priest, out of reverence for the word of God, prays that his heart and lips may be cleansed in order that he may worthily announce

8. THE GOSPEL

The priest again addresses the people with the usual greeting :

*P. Dominus vobiscum.
S. Et cum spiritu tuo.*

*P. The Lord be with you.
S. And with thy spirit.*

and there is a short introduction to the Gospel :

*P. Sequentia sancti Evangelii
secundum . . .*

*P. The continuation of the
Holy Gospel according to . . .*

The priest makes the sign of the Cross, thereby testifying that the Gospel is, as the Apostle says, truly the word of the Cross (1 Cor. 1 : 18). The

¹ The Tract, a chant without any Alleluias, is sung in Lent, and in Masses of the Dead.

² Formerly there were many Sequences. Pope Pius V. reduced their number to five, the five most important, viz. : *Victimæ paschali* ; *Veni sancte Spiritus* ; *Lauda Sion* ; *Stabat Mater* ; *Dies iræ*. Cf. Dr. N. Gühr's excellent treatise on the Sequences of the Roman Missal: *Die Sequenzen des römischen Messbuches*, Freiburg, 1901.

people at the same time make the same sign, that is, a small Cross with the thumb of the right hand on forehead, mouth, and breast, to signify symbolically that the word of God should be borne in their minds, confessed with their lips, and loved with their hearts.

P. Gloria tibi Domine,

P. Glory be to Thee, O Lord,

is the server's answer, and the Gospel,¹ which, like the Epistle, varies from day to day, is sung or read to the people.

The people stand during the Gospel, to show their great respect for the recitation of the Law of God, which formed the essential part of the Mass of Catechumens. Standing further symbolises the reverence due to God's word and the determination of the will to follow the Gospel precepts here on earth and to defend the Faith with our lives if necessary.

In olden times men drew their swords at the Gospel, while women bowed their heads in deep veneration. Nor were there wanting solemn expressions of this reverence for Christ's Gospel. The Emperor and the King of France and their consorts removed their crowns and diadems ; Polish Princes and Knights of Malta drew their swords, while the pallium was taken off by Eastern Bishops.

Other countries betokened the same respect in other ways. The faithful, for instance, in some places were told to lay down their weapons at the Gospel, because the Faith was not to be spread by the sword. Love must be the motive-power in extending God's kingdom. Thus all, both great and small, testified their reverence. The Fathers

¹ The Gospel or good tidings is a reading from one or other of the four Gospels, which record the salutary work of Christ's Redemption.

of the Council of Ephesus placed the Holy Gospels in their midst on a throne.

The same symbolical meaning is attached to the solemn censing of the book by the deacon, to the lights which are carried at the Gospel, for the word of the Lord is the light that shineth in darkness (*cf.* John 1 : 5), it is a lamp for the feet of every human being (*cf.* Ps. 118 : 105) walking the paths of this world's darkness.

The priest kisses the text of the Gospel which he has just read, and makes his own the words of the Psalmist : "I have loved Thy commandments above gold and the topaz ; . . . my soul has sought them " (Ps. 118 : 127, 129).

The reading closes with a short aspiration by the priest as he kisses the book :

Per evangelica dicta deleantur
nostra delicta.

May our sins be blotted out
by the words of the Gospel.

while the server says :

Laus tibi, Christe.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.¹

The "Preparation of the Offerers" is ended. Formerly the deacon, using some such words as *Ite, Missa est* (Go, the Mass is ended), gave the catechumens and public sinners the signal to depart. These words will again be heard, but they will then be addressed to all the faithful at the end of Mass. The formula probably originated in the civil courts and councils of the Senate, where the end of the meeting was announced in a similar manner.

The transition to the second and proper part of

¹ A sermon or homily often follows the reading of the Gospel, as it has done no doubt since the Apostolic age. This was a continuation of the custom of the synagogue (*cf.* Luc. 4 : 21 and Acts 13 : 15 with Acts 20 : 7).

the Mass—the essential part of the Sacrifice—is formed by the *Credo* (the Nicene Creed¹) which is so often² publicly and solemnly said. It serves to combine the Gospel which has preceded with the Mystery of Faith, which is so soon to follow.

The priest joins his hands on his breast to mark the submissiveness of his faith. He bows his head to accentuate the homage of his prayer. He bends the knee when recalling the mystery of our redemption, the Incarnation of God the Son. In this spirit he says :

9. CREDO³

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cœli et terræ, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero.

Genitum, non factum; consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de cœlis.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God of God; Light of Light; true God of true God.

Begotten, not made; consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.

¹ This Creed, which is that accepted in the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) is a development of one by the Fathers of Nicæa (A.D. 325), and for that reason is known as the Nicene Creed.

² The *Credo*, being a solemn prayer of the Church, is said on all Sundays, on the Feasts of our Lord, our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Mary Magdalen, the Holy Angels, Apostles, and Doctors of the Church, and on dedication feasts of the local church.

³ The Creed is a summary of our belief. The Church sums up her articles of faith in four different symbols: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, which, if not composed by St. Athanasius himself, is probably of a date not later than the fourth century, and the Profession of Faith of Pope Pius IV., used in receiving converts into the Church.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas.

Et ascendit in cœlum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit: qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas.

Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.

He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead: and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

And (*I believe*) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son: who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spake by the prophets.

And one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

II. THE ACTION OF SACRIFICE

(The Mass of the Faithful)

The second part of the Mass presents characteristics quite distinct from the foregoing. For the "Preparation of the Offerers" is a liturgical introduction, consisting of a number of prayers with a very slight connection between them, and presenting numerous variations. It has, strictly speaking, no direct bearing on the Mass, and merely helps to arouse religious fervour for the Holy Sacrifice. The "Preparation" perhaps shows traces of early religious meetings, themselves derived from the worship of the synagogues, particularly survivals of the Vigils, which were spent in reciting

psalms and litanies, in humble confession of sins, in singing hymns, and reading passages from the Old and New Testaments.

The different parts of the "Mass of the Faithful," on the contrary, form one continuous prayer which bears directly on the Action of Sacrifice. All the supplications, all the ceremonies and actions of the priest are inspired by the main idea of sacrifice.

Christ is present in the Mass not only as Victim, offered up and immolated for us, but also as the food of the soul of which all may partake. The Holy Sacrifice therefore comprises three main acts:

(1) The Offertory, or the oblation to God of the elements of Sacrifice.

(2) The Consecration, or the consummation of the Sacrifice.

(3) The Communion, or the partaking of the Sacrifice.

In other words the Offertory presents to God the Victim which is immolated at the Consecration and consumed in Holy Communion as sacramental food.

Further, the prayers, which accompany the three principal acts of Sacrifice, may be said to fall into two chief groups:

(a) Some prayers refer to the unconsecrated elements of bread and wine.

(b) Others refer to the sacred Body and Blood of the Lord, into which the bread and wine will soon be changed. This is the real explanation of those prayers which mention the elements, even before the Consecration, as an unspotted offering, the chalice of salvation, holy offerings, and so forth.

Furthermore, the prayers of the Canon refer continually to the humble demeanour of the priest, the only attitude becoming so pure and holy a Sacrifice. All prayers which beg for forgiveness of

"sins," "offences," "negligences," and the like, are to be understood in this sense. They should not be taken as implying that God could tolerate the priest standing at the altar in the state of mortal sin. On the contrary, if ever priest should manifest that spotless purity which his vow requires of him, it is surely at the time of Mass. All these expressions merely imply the deep conviction of one's unworthiness to appear before the God of all sanctity and love in whose eyes even the heavens are not pure.

The priest therefore recites the Canon in a spirit of deep humility, repeating, however, as an introduction to it the various prayers of

I. THE OFFERTORY

The oblation of bread and wine is introduced by an antiphon, called the "Offertory." The Mass being, as we have already said, both a Sacrifice and a spiritual banquet, the first Christians, with the exception of the few penitents who were admitted to the Sacrifice, communicated daily, and offered to the deacon of the Mass the bread and wine which were used for the celebration. They also made offerings (*oblaciones*) to provide for the wants of the poor, the widows, and the clergy. It was at this stage of the Mass that the people offered their gifts, and a great deal of time was often required for this purpose. The choir therefore filled up the interval by chanting a psalm,¹ a remnant of which is found in the simple verse of a psalm or antiphon which varies with the Feast in our liturgy and is our present "Offertory."

When offering the host, the priest raises on high

¹ Offerings for the altar are still made in some places in the Masses of the Dead. Collections for the poor and for the Church, still made at this time, owe their origin to this ancient practice, as do Mass-stipends also.

the paten upon which the host rests, and presenting it to God who dwells in heaven, says during the

OBLATION OF THE HOST

Suscipe sancte Pater, omnipotens æterne Deus, hanc immaculatam hostiam, quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi Deo meo vivo et vero, pro innumerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentis meis et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus christianis vivis atque defunctis : ut mihi et illis proficiat ad salutem in vitam æternam. Amen.

Accept, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this immaculate host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences, and for all here present ; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead : that it may be profitable for my own and for their salvation unto life eternal. Amen.

The priest, therefore, also offers the Sacrifice for those who assist at Mass. What stronger inducement can there be for Catholics to be present as often as possible, every day even, at the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who will plead for them with God, their Heavenly Father, in all their necessities ? Oh that men realised the infinite value of Holy Mass !

The sign of the Cross is made with the paten over the corporal, upon which the host, which has just been offered to God, is now laid.¹ This is, in the words of Pope Benedict XIV., a mystical representation of the Divine Lamb stretched upon the wood of the Cross before being sacrificed.

While a little water is being blessed and added to the wine, the following prayer is said, the prayer of

THE MIXING OF WINE AND WATER

Deus, qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti : da nobis

O God, who didst wonderfully create, and still more wonderfully renew, the dignity of man's nature :

¹ After the bread has been offered, the paten is concealed under the corporal or veil. The mystical sense of this action will be explained in the chapter on Church Vestments.

per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium
ejus Divinitatis esse consortes, qui
humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus
est particeps, Jesus Christus Filius
tuus Dominus noster, qui tecum
vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus
sancti Deus: per omnia sæcula
sæculorum. Amen.

grant that by the mystery of this
water and wine, we may be made
sharers of His Divinity, who
vouchsafed to become partaker
of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy
Son, our Lord; who liveth and
reigneth with Thee in the unity
of, &c. Amen.

All these ceremonies have not failed to impress the devout, and many beautiful thoughts have been the fruit of their meditations.

THE ELEMENTS OF SACRIFICE

Wheaten bread and grape wine are the two elements of the Holy Sacrifice, which are essential and strictly prescribed, not on account of their own intrinsic value, but because Christ freely chose them when instituting the Blessed Sacrament. These elements form the point of contact between the Sacrifice of the New Law and the bloodless food-offering of the Jews, the *Mincha*,¹ which offers precisely the same elements, and thus we see the verification of the prophecy which Malachy announced centuries beforehand. The sacrifice of Melchisedech, which God blessed, was also of bread and wine, and this, too, was a type of the Christian Sacrifice of the future.

Devout writers have commented upon the appropriateness of this choice from the very earliest times. The two elements of bread and wine have been called the choicest fruits of creation, the noblest gifts of God. For:

(a) Wheat, which grows only on good soil, and the grape, which matures only under a generous

¹ The Hebrew word "*mincha*," which the Prophet uses when foretelling the Sacrifice to come, has, according to Dr. F. Kaulen, in the Mosaic law the meaning of bloodless oblation of unleavened bread in contradistinction to sacrifices in which blood is shed (*Sebach*).

sun, represent the first of the fruits of the earth. Wine, which rejoices the heart of man, and bread, which builds up his body, have always been considered, even by the sacred writers, as the noblest products of the soil; they were a synonym for the necessary sustenance of life; therefore bread and wine were the most fitting elements to be changed by God's almighty power into the Body and Blood of Christ.

(b) Moreover, the host is formed from many grains of wheat and the wine is pressed from many grapes. This is a type of the elect, who, though many in number, and diverse in a thousand ways, are made one through the mystery of Christ's Sacrifice. In other words, it symbolises the visible union of all the members of Christ's mystical body or the Church.

(c) Even the *round* form of the host has its symbolical meaning. It represents the Sun of glory, the Infinite God, concealed under the apparent veil of the host.

The elements of sacrifice were, from the very outset, under strict ecclesiastical supervision:

(1) The bread must be unleavened.

(2) The wine must be mixed with a little water.

These rubrics have their symbolic meanings. The bread must be unleavened:

(a) because Christ celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples on the first day of the unleavened bread,

(b) and the bread which is to be transformed into the glorious Body of the Lord should not contain seeds of corruption;

(c) the unleavened bread is a clear figure of the purity of heart which is required of the faithful who, free from the leaven of sin, sit at the divine table.

In the meantime¹ the priest has performed an action, apparently modest, but of great importance in the eyes of the Church:²

THE MIXING OF WINE AND WATER

This ceremony, according to the explanation of the Council of Trent, is not without significance.

(a) It recalls the fact that Christ performed this same action at the Last Supper; such, at least, is the opinion of the Fathers—*e.g.* St. Justin, St. Irenæus, and St. Cyprian.

(b) It represents the blood and water which flowed from Christ's side, and from this wound the Church was born.

(c) It typifies the twofold nature in the one person of the Redeemer. The wine represents the divine nature, the water the human,³ and therefore the water alone, the type of our helpless nature—and not the wine—is blessed⁴ by the priest.

(d) It signifies a longing for intimate and inseparable union with our Lord (St. Justin and St. Cyprian), a union for which we poor mortals should yearn, after the examples of the Apostles: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

When once the wine and water are mixed, the priest, raising the chalice, offers it to the Heavenly Father, saying the prayer which accompanies

¹ The Carthusians, who follow the liturgy of the eleventh century, and the Dominicans, who conform to the rite of the thirteenth, perform this ceremony before Mass (Dom Guéranger).

² This rubric binds under pain of grave sin.

³ Though we must not abuse this comparison, as the Monophysites did, and think that the Humanity is absorbed in the Divinity. The two remain ever distinct, each with its own operation, yet indissolubly united in the one Person.

⁴ The blessing is not given here, nor at the end of the Sacrifice, in Masses of the Dead, because it is a symbol of the blessing given to the living.

THE OFFERING OF WINE

Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam, ut in conspectu divinæ Majestatis tuæ pro nostra et totius mundi salute cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.

We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that, in the sight of Thy divine Majesty, it may ascend with the odour of sweetness, for our salvation, and for that of the whole world. Amen.

The external oblation of the elements of sacrifice implies an internal offering of the heart. The three young men in the furnace, praying in the midst of the flames, afford us an example, and their words have been adapted to the prayer which the priest now says :

In spiritu humilitatis, et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu tuo hodie, ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.

In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord, and grant that the sacrifice we offer in Thy sight this day may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God.

Both elements are now raised to the dignity of sacred objects. Once more prayer is said to implore the blessing of the Holy Ghost, the God of Holiness and Love, a blessing which will sanctify these elements :

Veni sanctificator, omnipotens æternæ Deus, et benedic ✠ hoc sacrificium tuo sancto nomini præparatum.

Come, O Sanctifier, almighty, eternal God, and bless ✠ this sacrifice, prepared for Thy holy name.¹

Before, however, the priest begins the most important part of the Mass, he performs the ceremony of

¹ The offering is censed at High Mass in the form of a Cross, signifying a more solemn consecration of these gifts to Christ crucified. While the burning coal symbolises the fervour of all present, the rising clouds of smoke denote the acceptable prayer of both priest and people. The clouds which envelop the altar signify that it becomes after the consecration the mystical Calvary, the mountain of myrrh, the hill of incense, the sweet fragrance of which ascends unto heaven.

THE WASHING OF THE HANDS¹

This action symbolises the purity of soul, which the Church solemnly prescribes. "For," says St. Cyril, "we should stand at the altar with spotless hands and purest hearts." St. Thomas, commenting on the symbolism of St. Dionysius, further explains that the cleansing of the fingers, as contrasted with the washing of hands, marks the removal of even the slightest stain of sin.² Meanwhile, the priest recites the 25th Psalm, the first word of which is expressive :

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas ; et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine.

Ut audiam vocem laudis, et enarrem universa mirabilia tua.

Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ, et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam.

In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt ; dextera eorum repleta est muneribus.

Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum ; redime me, et miserere mei.

Pes meus stetit in directo ; in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine.

Gloria Patri, &c.

I will wash my hands among the innocent ; and will encompass Thy altar, O Lord.

That I may hear the voice of praise, and tell of all Thy marvellous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with bloody men.

In whose hands are iniquities ; their right hand is filled with gifts.

As for me, I have walked in my innocence ; redeem me, and have mercy upon me.

My foot hath stood in the right path ; in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

The Offertory is finished. The priest entreats Almighty God to deign to accept the offering, not

¹ This ceremony became a necessity in the first ages, when gifts of all kinds were received from the faithful. It soon acquired in the liturgy a symbolical meaning.

² The "Lavabo" also recalls the washing of hands which Pilate performed in testimony of Christ's innocence, and the washing of the disciples' feet by the God of all humility.

on account of the celebrant's own merits and virtues, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, and in honour of Christ's Blessed Mother, the Apostles, and all God's holy Saints. He says for this purpose

THE PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Suscipe, sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam passionis, resurrectionis, et ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri, et in honorem beatæ Mariæ semper virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistæ, et sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum, et omnium Sanctorum; ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem; et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in cœlis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Receive, O holy Trinity, this oblation, which we make to Thee, in memory of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honour of blessed Mary ever Virgin, of blessed John Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these¹ and of all the Saints; that it may be available to their honour² and our salvation; and may they vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

We have already mentioned and pointed out several times that the prayers of Holy Mass, at least before the Canon, imply that both the priest and people participate in the Holy Sacrifice. Here again the celebrant turns to the people, his brethren and offerers with him,³ urging them to join in his prayer. He extends his hands and joins them again, praying at the same time that "my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God." He does not again turn to the people until the Sacrifice is over, for he now withdraws into the holy of holies, and remains, as it were, apart from the congregation.

¹ The Saints here mentioned are those who in early times were commemorated in an especial manner, or whose relics were enclosed in the sepulchre of the altar.

² In order that the faithful on earth might reverence and imitate them more and more.

³ All present participate in some sense in the Holy Sacrifice, but particularly those who join in the action of Sacrifice, as the servers and those who communicate during the Mass.

ORATE FRATRES

P. Orate fratres, ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem.

P. Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours¹ may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.

The good will of the people is expressed in the response :

S. Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem quoque nostram, totiusque ecclesiæ suæ sanctæ. Amen.

S. May the Lord receive the sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name, to our benefit, and to that of all His holy Church. Amen.

The following prayers refer both to the feast of the day and to the Holy Sacrifice. Because they are said in secret, they are called

THE SECRETS

These prayers, like the Collects in the Mass of Catechumens, vary in every Mass. Their general signification has been explained by Lebrun. The Church in nearly every "Secret" prays to God graciously to accept of the gifts offered, and so to reform our hearts by His grace, that we may become a pleasing sacrifice in His divine sight.

The Sacrifice has now been completely offered to God, and the second and most important part of the Mass begins, calling for greater attention and more thankfulness on the part of worshippers. This second division is called

2. THE CONSECRATION

The liturgical prayers of the Canon, the form of which never varies, lead up to the main object of

¹ Indicating that the Mass is the Sacrifice of both the priest and the faithful, who are present and offer it with him and by his hands.

the Mass, the mysterious transformation of the two elements of sacrifice, the bread and wine, into the Sacred Body and Blood of our Lord.

The transition between this new phase of the Divine Sacrifice and the Offertory, which we have just considered, is formed by the

PREFACE

The Preface is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, one of the most beautiful prayers in the liturgy. Priest, people, the angels, all join in one joyful canticle, sung to the glory of God.

The Preface may be divided into three parts : the introduction and conclusion, which never change, and the body of the Preface, which occasionally varies.

The chant opens with the customary greeting of the priest :

P. Dominus vobiscum.

P. The Lord be with you.

an appropriate salutation ; for the liturgy is about to transport us to the throne of God. Priest and people, all offer to God the Father their tribute of gratitude, imitating thereby the example of Christ at the Last Supper. All their attention is centred on the mystery, their hearts are fixed on heaven, in answer to the solemn but urgent appeal of the priest, an appeal expressive in its simplicity :

P. Sursum corda !

P. Lift up your hearts !

S. Habemus ad Dominum.

S. We lift them up unto the Lord.

There is a symbolical representation of these words in the accompanying action of the priest : for he raises his eyes and hands to heaven. Then, proceeding, he breaks out with a cry of thankfulness, which briefly sums up the whole Preface :

P. Gratias agamus Domino
Deo nostro.

S. Dignum et justum est.

P. Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates, Cœli cœlorumque Virtutes ac beata Seraphim socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamur supplicii confessione dicentes :

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

S. It is meet and just so to do.

P. It is truly¹ meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations adore it, the Powers tremble before it.² The Heavens, and the heavenly Virtues, and the Blessed Seraphim in common jubilee do glorify it. In union with whom we beseech Thee to ordain that our voices be admitted, saying in suppliant accord :

This liturgical chant is addressed to God the Father. But our prayer is without merit in God's sight, unless it is offered through the intercession of Christ our Lord, the Mediator of mankind (1 Tim. 2 : 5), and King of Heavenly Glory (*cf.* Ps. 23 : 7), whom Angels, Powers, and Dominations obey. Thus, says St. Thomas, our prayer of thanksgiving is offered to God in precisely the same manner in which His divine favours are bestowed upon creatures, viz., by the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

The angels incessantly sing their joyful hymn of praise before the throne of God, and we, humbly acknowledging our unworthiness, seek to unite our

¹ The body of the Preface, that is to say, as far as the word "Dicentes," had formerly 250 variations : at present there are in the liturgy eleven different Prefaces, adapted to the principal feasts of the Church. We have reproduced here the ordinary Preface : *Præfatio communis*.

² Not on account of anxiety or trouble, but because they are over-awed by God's infinite nature.

praises with their acceptable song of triumph,¹ the Trisagion,² which the angelic choirs address to the most Holy Trinity. They repeat, and we with them, the external canticle of heavenly adoration :

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

As the Jews of old received Christ with acclamations of joy, so the Church now welcomes, with transports of love, God, who is about to come into our midst.

The kissing of the altar which follows, and the various signs of the Cross which the priest makes, emphasise the meaning of the words which are spoken, and serve as an introduction to the

CANON ³

This selection of liturgical prayers is of unparalleled beauty. They seem to give utterance to the feelings of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ,

¹ The different names given to the Sanctus are sufficient proof of the esteem in which the ancient liturgy held this angelic song: *Trisagion*, *Hymnus seraphicus* or *angelicus*, *Hymnus triumphalis*, &c. The Trisagion is composed of words taken from Isaiah (6: 3), from the 117th Psalm, and from the acclamations of joy which greeted Christ on the occasion of His solemn entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21).

² The "Trisagion" (thrice holy) is addressed to the three Divine Persons.

³ The word Canon signifies in Greek: rule, direction, order. It comprises, strictly speaking, the fixed forms of prayer in Holy Mass from the *Sanctus* to the *Pater Noster*. It has sometimes a wider meaning, and includes all the prayers from the *Sanctus* to the end of Mass. Its origin and present form are very ancient and therefore venerable. Its form was fixed 1300 years ago. Pope Gregory I. (590-604) was the last to introduce a change—and that a slight one—in the words.

and the mind cannot fail to be impressed by the accents of persevering prayer, and by the spirit of humility, love and adoration, which pervade these confident appeals to the Omnipotent God, as well as by the impressive ceremonies which set them forth.

Sayings of Christ and Apostolic traditions form the groundwork of the Canon, and to this the devotion of Popes has made additions. Thus the Canon is in the truest sense *the* prayer of God's Church.

Silence now reigns at the altar. In the Old Law the High Priest entered alone into the holy of holies. Like Moses, he spoke alone with God, and the Lord answered him (*cf.* Exod. 19 : 19). Thus, too, the priest recites in silence the wonderful prayers of the Canon, and renews the mysterious Sacrifice of Christ's infinite love. The ceremony proceeds in absolute silence; the priest's voice no longer alternates in prayer with that of the people, for he alone is ordained to offer the Sacrifice in the name of the Church, he alone can come into close contact with his Lord and his God! Silence envelops, like a mysterious veil, the "enclosed garden" (Cant. 4 : 12), the "sealed source" (*ibid.*) of the divine mysteries. For we are truly in presence of the mysteries of religion. It is the prayer of prayers which we are saying, a secret holy action which we are performing. Silence becomes the representative of the divine High Priest when celebrating the divine mystery. Truly, "the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2 : 20).

There is, too, a mystical explanation. The silence observed in the liturgy is a type of the infinite and inexhaustible patience of the Lamb about to be a victim (Jer. 11:19): for in the opinion of all liturgical writers, an opinion adopted by Pope Innocent III.,

the Canon is a mystical representation of our Lord's Passion. The priest for that reason formerly held his arms extended in the form of a Cross.¹ The various signs of the Cross² which the priest makes bear the same interpretation; they further imply:

(a) that the priest, before the consecration, gives his blessing to the material elements;

(b) or that he now offers acts of faith, adoration, and love to his Redeemer, who will be present on the altar³ after the consecration.

The five following prayers form the proximate preparation for the consecration. The priest first addresses himself to God the Father. Jesus Christ, however, the divine High Priest, is his intermediary; through Him he offers the prayers of Sacrifice, three in number, the first of which is the

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH⁴

Te igitur, clementissime Pater,
per Jesum Christum Filium tuum
Dominum nostrum supplices ro-
gamus ac petimus, uti accepta
habeas et benedicas hæc ✠ dona,
hæc ✠ munera, hæc ✠ sancta

We⁵ therefore humbly pray
and beseech Thee, most merciful
Father, through Jesus Christ Thy
Son, our Lord, that Thou wouldst
vouchsafe to accept and bless
these ✠ gifts,⁶ these ✠ presents,

¹ The deacon and sub-deacon place themselves behind the priest, and thus recall the flight of the Apostles during the sacred Passion.

² For an explanation of the sign of the Cross, see p. 18. St. Thomas (Summa, iii. 83, 85) divides the different signs of the Cross made during the Holy Sacrifice into nine categories.

³ According to a rubric, which, however, is not binding, a third candle, called the "Sanctus" or "Consecration candle," is lit before the consecration. It denotes the presence of Christ, the Light of Heaven (Joan. 8: 12), present on the altar until after the Communion.

⁴ A more extensive explanation of the prayers of the Canon is given by Bellarmine, Le Brun, Benedict XIV., Bona, Gihl, &c.

⁵ "We," because the priest offers his prayer in the name of the whole Church of Christ.

⁶ Many interpret these expressions as follows: "gifts," which we receive through the goodness of God; "presents," which we humbly offer to God; "offerings," which are destined to be changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord.

sacrificia illibata, in primis quæ tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica: quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum, una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro *N.* et Antistite nostro *N.* et omnibus orthodoxis atque catholicæ et apostolicæ fidei cultoribus.

these ✠ holy unspotted Sacrifices, which, in the first place, we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church, to which vouchsafe to grant peace; as also to protect, unite, and govern it throughout the world, together with Thy servant *N.* our Pope, *N.* our Bishop, as also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

The priest redoubles the fervour of his prayer: he raises his hands and eyes to heaven, lowers them again, and, with a profound inclination, joins his hands in form of prayer and rests them upon the altar. Raising them once more, he blesses the offering. All these actions represent in a visible manner the spirit of the Church's prayer and the sanctifying power of her blessing.

The celebrant prays for the whole of Christendom, for the Catholic Church throughout the world. Then he makes a memento for those for whom the Mass is especially offered, for those souls who are dear to him,¹ for their various necessities, for himself and for those present who offer the Sacrifice with him. All this forms

THE PRAYER FOR THE LIVING

Memento, Domine, famulorum, famularumque tuarum, *N.* et *N.*, et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio: pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se suisque omnibus, pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salu-

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.*, and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee, this Sacrifice of praise for themselves, and for all near or dear to them; for the redemption of

¹ In the first ages of the Church, diptychs or registers consisting of two leaves folded were in use. The names of the living and the dead were inscribed on these tablets, and while the celebrant commemorated the names in the Canon, the deacon read them to the people.

tis et incolumitatis suæ, tibi que reddunt vota sua æterno Deo, vivo et vero.

their souls, for the hope of salvation¹ and of safety, and who offer to Thee, the eternal, living, and true God, these their vows.²

This prayer testifies to the charity existing between all members of God's Church, whether militant here on earth, suffering in purgatory, or triumphant in heaven. It is this union of all parts of God's kingdom which leads the Church at this point to invoke in her liturgy God's Saints, our example in life, our intercessors in heaven. This is done in the Commemoration of the Saints. Later on she will pray for the holy souls.

COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS

Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriose semper Virginis Mariæ Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi; sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreæ, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Simonis et Thaddæi, Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiani, et omnium Sanctorum

Communicating with, and honouring in the first place,³ the memory of the glorious and ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ; as also of the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian,⁴ and of all

¹ "Salvation" refers to their eternal welfare, "safety" means more temporal or corporal blessings.

² "Vows" signify here the firm resolution and desire to serve God.

³ "In the first place" of the Immaculate Mother of God, "who," as St. Ephrem says, "surpasses in holiness the Cherubim and Seraphim, and who is higher in glory than the rest of the heavenly court."

⁴ This prayer mentions, besides the name of the Blessed Virgin, the names of the twelve Apostles and of a few Martyrs, such as the first Popes Linus, Cletus, Clement. It, moreover, commemorates Popes Xystus and Cornelius, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and the Roman deacon Lawrence, and five other martyrs, who were all the object of special devotion in Rome during the third and fourth centuries.

tuorum: quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ muniamur auxilio. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Thy Saints; by whose merits and prayers, grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confident in the powerful intercession of the Saints, the priest prepares to offer, as Christ has directed, the spotless Victim to God, in expiation of the sins of mankind. Like the priest of the Old Law, he extends his hands over the elements of bread and wine, to denote that the Victim is charged with the burden of sin. But what was mere symbolism in the ancient Jewish rite became a reality in the Christian Mass, in which the celebrant adores his Saviour as the Lamb of Sacrifice who has taken upon Him the sins of the world. For since no expiation of man could satisfy God's outraged justice, the well-beloved Son of the Eternal Father offered Himself up as a Sacrifice of propitiation, and daily renews the Sacrifice of Calvary on the altars of the Catholic Church.

These sentiments animate the priest, while saying the following prayer, extending his hands over the offering and blessing it:

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ, sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ, quæsumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias: diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to accept this oblation of our service,¹ as also of Thy whole family: dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The priest sums up, as it were, all the foregoing prayers in the concluding aspiration of love which

¹ "Our service" refers to the priest; "thy whole family" stands for the faithful present at the Sacrifice, or, as others explain, for the whole Church.

he addresses to the Heavenly Father, blessing the offering at the same time.

BLESSING

Quam oblationem tu Deus, in omnibus quæsumus, bene✠dictam, adscrip✠tam, ra✠tam, rationabilem acceptabilemque facere digneris, ut nobis Cor✠pus et San✠guis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to make blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable, that it may become to us¹ the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

During this last prayer before the consecration five signs of the Cross are made over the oblations. The following interpretations are given to this ceremony:

(a) It symbolically represents the five sacred wounds.

(b) It typifies, says St. Bonaventure, the five senses of Christ's body, which were subjected to terrible tortures for the sins of mankind.

(c) There is another and more precise explanation: a distinction is made between the three blessings which are given to both elements together, and the two blessings which are bestowed upon the bread and wine separately. The former refer to the Blessed Trinity, through whose power the words of consecration produce their divine effect. The latter are the Church's symbolical representation of the momentous dogma of our faith, that the food of man, bread and wine, becomes the divine nourishment of our souls.

THE CONSECRATION

And now the solemn moment has come. The bread and wine of sacrifice are to be changed by

¹ "To us," that is to say, that it might turn to our benefit, become the spiritual food of our souls (Dom Guéranger).

the sacramental words of Christ into His adorable Body and Blood. The consecration is, as we have already said, the essential action of the eucharistic sacrifice, identifying it with the oblation of Christ on the Cross. For not only is it the living source of all graces of the soul, but the consecration of the host, which takes place independently of that of the wine, marks on our altar, though without shedding of blood, the self-same separation between the sacred Body and Blood of Christ which took place long ago on Mount Calvary.

The priest repeats in silent adoration the Gospel narrative of the institution of the mystery of God's love, speaking in the person of Christ Himself. Jesus was the sole minister of sacrifice at the Last Supper; He is now the invisible High Priest, who offers His wondrous oblation by the hands of His visible minister, the priest. It is Christ Himself, says St. Ambrose, who, through the mouth of His priest, pronounces the sacramental words.

This explains why the Church views this great act less as an admirable form of prayer than as a divine drama faithfully reproducing every incident of the upper room. The priest takes bread into his hands just as Christ did, raises his eyes to heaven, blesses it and speaks the very words of Christ. In a word he consecrates bread in the name of the Lord, and by divine power it is changed into the sacred Body of the Redeemer.

And when Christ is present on the altar the priest is the first to adore Him. He bends the knee and renders homage to his dear Master as to his God, for there now remains but the appearance of bread, enveloping as in a mystic veil the splendour of God's infinite Majesty. The celebrant then raises the sacred host on high, that

it may be seen¹ by the people, for the following reasons:

(a) In order that all co-offerers with him may also adore with thankful hearts the God of all love.

(b) As an allusion to a similar ceremony in the Old Law. Christ's Sacrifice is offered up to God in the same way as offerings were made by the priests of Israel; but their sacrifices were but faint shadows of this sacred mystery which completes them.

(c) Another interpretation relates to the Sacrifice of the Cross, which is perpetuated in Holy Mass. The raising of the host symbolises the lifting up of Christ on the Cross.

All the ceremonies observed when consecrating the host are repeated and silently reproduced during the consecration of the precious Blood of the Lord.

How simple is everything here. A few words are spoken, and God's love performs the mysterious act of transubstantiation by which the bread and wine are changed into the sacred Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is the repetition of the divine act of creation: "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3),

¹ The Holy Father has recently granted an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days to those who look at the sacred host at the moment of the elevation, and say with St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

The *Annuaire Pontifical*, commenting on this decree, writes as follows: "When the priest during Holy Mass shows the sacred host to the people, it is evident that the faithful should look at it, otherwise the action of the priest would have no meaning. For this reason the Carthusians do not genuflect until after the double elevation at the *Pater Noster*."

It will probably take some time to induce the faithful to abandon the deep-rooted custom of bowing their heads at the moment of the elevation, without looking at all at our Lord, who deigns to show Himself under the eucharistic veil in order to receive the homage of Christians.

However, one may first bow the head and then look at the host, both being acts of adoration,

and light was created. It is a commemoration of the sublimest of mysteries—also recorded in a few words, yet comprising all the miracles which accompanied Christ's Incarnation: *And the Word was made flesh* (John 1:14).

The Divine Word, the Saviour Himself, dwells amongst us after the consecration and gives Himself to be the food of all who wish to receive Him.

Christ is now on the altar under both species—under the external appearances of bread and wine—and in Him are present His Divine and Human Natures, His Soul and Body; He is no longer passible as when on earth, but is in a glorified state, the state in which He is the object of adoration in heaven.

Before the priest pronounces the words of consecration he wipes on the corporal the first finger and thumb of both hands. For, says Thomas à Kempis, "how clean ought those hands to be, how pure the mouth, how holy the body, how unspotted the heart of the priest, into whom the Author of purity so often enters" (*Imit.* bk. iv. ch. xi. 6).

Then the celebrant pronounces the words of consecration, which run as follows:

Qui pridie quam pateretur,
accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas: et elevatis oculis in cœlum, ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens bene✠dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes:

HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM.

Simili modo, postquam cœnatum est accipiens et hunc præclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, item tibi gratias agens bene✠dixit, deditque

Who the day before He suffered, took bread (*he takes the host*) into His holy and venerable hands (*he raises his eyes to heaven*), and with His eyes lifted up towards heaven, to God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless, break, and give to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this:

FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

In like manner, after He had supped (*he takes the chalice in both his hands*), taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and giving Thee

discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes:

HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET ÆTERNI TESTAMENTI: MYSTERIUM FIDEI: QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.

thanks, He blessed, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of this:

FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT: THE MYSTERY OF FAITH; WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY, TO THE REMISSION OF SINS.

The Holy Sacrifice is consummated! The consecration, the act of transubstantiation, has produced a threefold effect in Holy Mass: the Divine Victim becomes actually present, is offered up, and is immolated (*productio, oblatio, immolatio*). Further, the separate consecration of the bread and wine is, in a mystical sense, the painless immolation of the Divine Lamb, typifying that separation of His Blood from His Body, which was accomplished on Calvary with the most painful reality.

God is present! Christian piety loves to dwell on the opinion of the Fathers—although the Church here reserves her judgment—that the inhabitants of heaven descend at this solemn hour into our midst, and the angels¹ throng round the throne of the Lamb. Patristic writers, however much they differ in their manner of expression, endorse the words of St. John Chrysostom: “The angels surround the priest of God at that solemn hour; they encircle the altar, adoring Him, who lies there as the Victim of sacrifice.”

It is now the hour when Christ dispenses the treasures of His love, for Jesus, the infinite and merciful God, has renewed the mystery of His Passion for our sakes:

¹ Several liturgical writers here speak of an Angel of Sacrifice, because the Prayer of the Canon (*Supplices te rogamus*) makes mention of the holy Angel (*per manus sancti Angeli*). See p. 70.

Hæc quotiescumque feceritis,
in mei memoriam facietis.

As often as ye do these
things, ye shall do them in re-
membrance of Me.

The divine action of Jesus Christ thus becomes the model which both the Church and the priest follow. And as our Lord, before His death, commended Himself to His Heavenly Father, so now the priest offers to God the renewal of Christ's Sacrifice in the prayers of

DEDICATION TO GOD THE FATHER

Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatæ passionis, nec non et ab inferis resurrectionis, sed et in cœlos gloriosæ ascensionis : offerimus præclaræ Majestati tuæ de tuis donis ac datis Hostiam ✠ puram, Hostiam ✠ sanctam, Hostiam ✠ immaculatam, Panem ✠ sanctum vitæ æternæ, et Calicem ✠ salutis perpetuæ.

Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris : et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium Patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ, et quod tibi obtulit

Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed Passion¹ of the same Christ Thy Son, our Lord, His Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and grants, a pure Victim, a holy Victim, an immaculate Victim, the holy Bread of eternal life, and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.

Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as² Thou wert graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel,³ and the sacrifice of our

¹ The consecration commemorates the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ : His Passion, because it perpetuates, though without shedding of blood, His Redeeming Sacrifice : His Resurrection and Ascension, because He is present under both species alive and in a glorified state.

² This comparison of the Mass with the sacrifices of the Old Law does not imply that they were of a higher or even an equal order. It merely emphasises the faith and devotion with which the above-mentioned servants of God offered their sacrifices.

³ These sacrifices, according to Pope Innocent, were the most perfect types of the Sacrifice of the New Law : Abel, who was slain by his brother : Abraham, who offered his well-beloved son ; Melchisedech, the King of peace, who offered the bloodless sacrifice of bread and wine.

summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

Patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest Melchisedech offered to Thee, a holy Sacrifice and a spotless Victim.

Holy Mass cannot but be pleasing in God's sight. For Christ is Himself the true Lamb of Sacrifice, and is hence infinitely dear to the heart of His Heavenly Father. But the priest, too, shares in the Sacrifice. He offers it in the name of the Lord with the power which is given to him from on high. But this inestimable privilege, this wonderful outpouring of grace overpowers him. In the confusion of his heart, he can only beg of God to graciously accept *his* Sacrifice, notwithstanding the fact that *he* has offered it, just as God was pleased to receive the offerings of His devout servants, Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech.

And now, turning to the holy Angel of Sacrifice, he begs of him to bear his offering to the throne of the Almighty, in order that all, who have shared in his oblation, may also be filled with the life-giving blessing of Heaven. This prayer is his privilege, for he is the consecrated minister of the pure Sacrifice, the immaculate Sacrifice of the crucified Redeemer, upon which, by virtue of his office, he bestows a five-fold blessing. Such, then, is the meaning of the following prayer :

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus, jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime Altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ

We most humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, let these offerings be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel¹ to Thy Altar

¹ Some understand by "the holy Angel," the "Angel of Prayer," mentioned in Tobias (12 : 12). Others consider St. Michael or one of the archangels as the guardian angel of the Blessed Sacrament. There are good reasons for the opinion that this "Angelus sanctus" is the Holy Ghost, co-operating in this Divine Mystery of love, or Jesus Christ Himself, who is also styled the Angel of Great Counsel (Is. 9 : 6 in LXX).

Majestatis tuæ: ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione, sacrosanctum Filii tui Corporis et sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cœlesti et gratia repleamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

on high,¹ in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty, that as many of us as, by participating in this Altar,² shall receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

All these prayers which follow the consecration, particularly when they are accompanied by the blessing of the oblation, testify the priest's faith in the mystery of the Cross and his love of the Redeemer. But we must not forget that the blessings given after the consecration have, as we have already explained, quite a distinct meaning from those bestowed before it. For :

(a) neither consecration nor blessing can be really intended here by the Church, since the Author of all blessings, God Himself, is present on the altar;

(b) the sign of the Cross can only then be a symbolical representation and commemoration of Christ's crucifixion:

(c) or else it is a mystical profession of faith in the presence of the Redeemer, particularly as the five blessings typify the five wounds.

Prayers are still being offered for those who are present at the Sacrifice, but not for them only. The priest says Mass in the name of the Church, and as she is the Mother of all the faithful, her love embraces all her children. Some are waging battle here on earth, some are triumphant in the glory of heaven, but others are in the abode of suffering

¹ This sublime prayer mentions two altars : an earthly altar of which we partake, and a mystical one, the golden altar of the Apocalypse, which is before the throne of God in heaven (Ap. 8 : 3).

² The Church here commemorates in a special manner those who communicate with the priest during Mass : for they are in the strict sense offerers with him of the Holy Sacrifice.

and penance. The thousands in Purgatory, whom we too often forget, are nevertheless united with us by the bonds of Christ's redeeming love, and claim our intercession.

The ancient liturgy therefore prescribed that after the memento of the living the priest should remember in general all those who have departed this life, and are doing penance for their sins, and that some should be even mentioned in particular.¹ A final commemoration is made of the whole Church of Christ, with special mention of certain Saints, who sealed their faith with their blood, and were best known at the time when this prayer was composed.

Thus the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all, unites under the one Head all the members of the Church, whether in Heaven, on earth, or in Purgatory. And whereas, before the consecration, we invoked the Saints in glory that the Divine Sacrifice might be worthily celebrated, now, after the consecration, we rely more on the efficacy of the Sacrifice itself, and even hope to be one day of the number of God's chosen friends in Paradise.

The liturgy expresses all this in the following

MEMENTO

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum *N.* et *N.*, qui nos præcesserunt cum signo fidei et dormiunt in somno pacis. *Ips*is, Domine, et omni-

Be mindful,² O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.*, who are gone before us with the sign of Faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace. To these, O Lord,

¹ In the first ages of the Church lists, often very long lists, of the departed were read, and their souls were recommended to God during the Mass.

² *Memento* signifies "Remember." The Church places the commemoration of the living before the consecration, because they can partake of the Sacrifice; the commemoration of the dead comes after the consecration, because only the fruits of the Sacrifice offered up by others can be applied to them.

bus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

At the mention of the word Christ, an inclination of the head is prescribed. This rubric is interpreted as follows:

(a) It denotes the inclination of our Lord's Divine Head when He expired.

(b) Others interpret this action—particularly in connection with the text of the prayer—as a mystical allusion to Christ's descent to Limbo, and to the happy tidings of deliverance which His dolorous Passion merited for the souls detained there.

After the prayer for the dead comes a special prayer for us sinful men and women who are still alive, but soon to join the departed:

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus: cum Joanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Cæcilia, Anastasia, et omnibus Sanctis tuis, intra quorum nos consortium, non estimator meriti, sed veniæ, quæsumus, largitor admitte. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

And to us sinners,¹ Thy servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs; with John,² Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints: into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not weighing our merits, but freely granting Thy pardon. Through Christ our Lord.

¹ These words, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* ("And to us sinners"), are the only words in the Canon which the priest pronounces in a somewhat elevated tone of voice, to symbolise an act of public self-humiliation. At the same time he strikes his breast in token of contrition.

² The Church mentions here, besides St. John the Baptist, fourteen martyrs, both men and women, who up to the fourth century shed their blood for Christ.

This prayer does not close with the usual Amen, because the Church's appeal to Christ and the Blessed Trinity develops into a solemn hymn of praise, which thus ends the Canon :

Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sancti-
ficās, vivi-
ficās, bene-
dicis et præ-
stas nobis. Per ip-
sum, et cum ip-
so, et in ip-
so est tibi Patri
omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus
sancti omnis honor et gloria. Per
omnia sæcula sæculorum.

By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things.¹ Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory. For ever and ever.

The liturgy here describes in a few words the whole meaning of the Divine Sacrifice. Christ is present on the altar as Saviour of souls and Bestower of every blessing, in the glory of God's Majesty. He has truly come to us as the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2 : 5).

The ceremonies which the priest performs while pronouncing these words throw their meaning into relief, for it is the sign of the Cross, the symbol of our Redemption, which the celebrant makes three times on the sacred Body and Blood of Christ. But this does not imply any fresh act of consecration.

(a) It is, rather, an eloquent testimony of faith in the presence of Jesus Christ, the plenitude of all blessing, who truly becomes here the object of our adoration.

(b) It is, says Pope Benedict XIV., an external profession of the truth, that in this mystery of love

¹ "All these good things" may be understood in several ways. One of the best explanations is that they signify the sacred Body and Blood, which by consecration take the place of the material elements of bread and wine. For these elements have been "created" as material objects, then "sanctified" by the prayer of the Offertory, "quickened," as it were, in consecration, and they "bless," because they confer blessings on us in Holy Communion.

the same Body and Blood, which were once offered on the Cross, are now immolated on the altar.

(c) The Church's symbolism reaches a higher level in the ceremony which follows. The priest makes five signs of the Cross with the sacred host itself in grateful remembrance of the Five Wounds which are the ever-flowing sources of grace for the world's redemption. This ritual act is performed as follows:

(d) Three crosses are made over the chalice¹ containing the precious Blood. "Through Him," as Mediator, "with Him," as Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and "in Him," as one with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Divine Nature, all glory is offered to God, and salvation descends to mankind.

(e) Two crosses are repeated above the chalice, and this may symbolise the tribute of adoration offered to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; for:

(1) Holy Mass is an effect produced by all the Divine Persons of the most Blessed Trinity;

(2) the greatest possible glory is rendered to the Triune God, because the Mass is but the commemoration and renewal of Christ's eternal act of satisfaction to the adorable Majesty of God.

The people, through the server, answer "Amen," to express their co-operation in all the sacred actions performed in deep silence during the Canon, which has just ended.

3. THE COMMUNION

The third division, the Communion, comprises the final ceremonies of Holy Mass, and thus com-

¹ This threefold blessing, says Pope Innocent III., symbolises the threefold Passion of Christ: the torture of His sacred Body, the sorrow of His Soul, the compassion of His Heart for sinners.

pletes the Divine Sacrifice. We have already pointed out that the Holy Eucharist is food for our souls as well as Sacrifice. If, then, the Divine Lamb has been mystically immolated for us at the consecration, the Mass would be incomplete, were this divine food not consumed, if not by all present, as in early days,¹ at least by the officiating minister.

The pious practice of "spiritual communion" which the faithful make, while the priest communicates sacramentally, is a remnant of the early Christian custom, when all partook of the sacred Banquet. But it is to be hoped, that, in accordance with the wish of our Holy Father Pius X., daily communion will once more become the rule.

The Church in her liturgy introduces the communion of the priest with a series of beautiful prayers, the *Pater Noster* forming the transition to this part of the Mass, just as the Preface served to introduce the Canon.

"Thus shall you pray" (Matt. 6:9) said Christ in teaching His disciples the "Our Father," which is used word for word by the priest. The first four clauses give praise to God; the last three are petitions for all human needs. The following exhortation prepares for the *Pater Noster*:

Oremus. Præceptis salutaribus
moniti, et divina institutione for-
mati, audemus dicere :

Let us pray. Instructed by Thy
saving precepts, and following Thy
divine institution, we presume to
say :

¹ General communions were so numerous that the deacons in many of the ancient Christian communities gave notice to those who did not wish to communicate to withdraw, saying: *Qui non communicat del locum*, "Let him who will not communicate make room." The communicants were then admonished not to approach the holy table if in a state of mortal sin, the deacon repeating: *Sancta sanctis*, "Holy things to the holy."

PATER NOSTER

Pater noster, qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum; fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie; et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris; et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

S. Sed libera nos a malo.

P. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation.

S. But deliver us from evil.

P. Amen.

The last petition, begging to be delivered from evil, is further developed in the following embolism of the liturgy:

Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine, ab omnibus malis præteritis, præsentibus et futuris; et intercedente beata et gloriosa semper Virgine Dei Genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque Andrea, et omnibus Sanctis da propitius pacem in diebus nostris ut ope misericordiæ tuæ adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi et ab omni perturbatione securi. Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days; that by the assistance of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth God, world without end. Amen.

Peace and love! These two ideas constantly recur in this and the following prayers. The priest signs himself with the paten, thereby signifying his hope of obtaining that peace for which every human creature yearns. He then kisses the paten in token of love and respect, for he desires to offer the homage of his heart, the "new sepulchre" which is to receive Christ, the Prince of Peace, who "maketh peace through the Blood of

His Cross, both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven," (Coloss. 1: 20).

The preceding prayer being said, the priest performs a number of important actions in preparation for communion. The first of these ceremonies requiring an explanation is

THE BREAKING OF THE HOST

This liturgical ceremony is full of meaning. It is the repetition of an act performed by the Divine Master at the Last Supper. In accordance with the Jewish custom, He too broke bread and divided it (*cf.* Matt. 26: 26). We repeat, the Mass is a spiritual meal as well as a sacrifice, and it was originally called "the breaking of bread."

The following mystical reasons¹ have been given to explain the fraction of the Host:

(a) The ceremony, say the Fathers, typifies the violent death on the Cross of the Crucified (*cf.* Isa. 53: 4-5).

(b) Further, the breaking of bread is a visible representation of the Blessed Eucharist, considered as the divine food of our souls, for Holy Sacrifice was usually thus distributed by fraction in this manner throughout the whole East.

(c) The threefold division of the host also suggests the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the threefold office of Christ, who came as Prophet, Priest, and King.

¹ We recall here what has already been mentioned in our Introduction, that some ceremonies have an historical origin, but they have been retained as part of the liturgy on mystical grounds.

The Eastern rite divides the host into four parts, the Mozarabic into nine, the Roman always into three: the first portion was formerly kept till the following Mass, the second was reserved for the sick and for prisoners, while the third was used for the communion of the faithful.

(*d*) Lastly, the sacramental Body of our Lord, the host, is a type of Christ's mystical Body, the Church, which comprises three states—militant, suffering, and triumphant.

Pax ✠ Domini sit ✠ semper
vobiscum. ✠

May the peace of the Lord be
always with you.

The priest pronounces these words while making the sign of the Cross three times with the particle over the chalice, as if he wished to express in a visible manner that the blessed gift of peace can only be obtained through the merits of Christ's Passion. For He preached the Gospel of Peace, and has reconciled man with God through that same Cross.

The breaking of bread may be mystically connected closely with the ceremony which immediately follows :

THE COMMINGLING OF THE TWO SPECIES

This is effected by the priest putting a particle of the sacred host into the chalice.¹ It means that the one Christ, whole and undivided, is present under both species, and exists in every particle of each species. For although they are both mystically separated, the whole person of Christ is living and glorious under each separate form. Thus, by way of concomitance, the precious Blood is united with the Body of Christ in the sacred host, while the sacred Body exists with the Blood of the Lord in the chalice.

Ardent love of the Holy Sacrifice often led sacred

¹ "This union takes place to teach us (1) that Christ's Body and Blood do not now exist apart ; (2) that the one sacrament consists of the two elements of bread and wine ; (3) that Christ's soul was reunited with His sacred Body."—*Durandus*.

writers to look for mystical coincidences in the Mass. The communion appealed to them, as it did to Pope Benedict XIV., as the counterpart of the consecration. Just as the separate consecrations signified the separation of the sacred Body and Blood, and thus the sacramental death of Christ, so the union of the two species represents the return to life of the Lamb that was dead and now reigns eternally (*cf.* Ap. 5 : 12-13).

That the Death and Resurrection of our Lord may be to us the source of eternal salvation is the petition of the following prayer :

Hæc commixtio et consecratio
Corporis et Sanguinis Domini
nostri Jesu Christi fiat accipen-
tibus nobis in vitam æternam.
Amen.

May this commingling and con-
secration¹ of the Body and Blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us
that receive it effectual to eternal
life. Amen.

The eternal life, for which the Church prays, is nothing else than the perfect peace of our heavenly home. The priest is about to receive the God of peace and love, and hence, from the *Pater Noster* to the communion, he constantly begs for the peace of God which nothing except sin can disturb.

Hitherto the celebrant has constantly directed his prayers to the Heavenly Father. From this moment forward he turns directly to God the Son, now before him on the altar, and soon to enter into his soul. He therefore prepares himself for the reception of his God, and says for that purpose :

¹ This word "consecration" presents some difficulty. "Consecration" may be used whenever an object acquires a new symbolical meaning. Therefore, as the separate consecrations of the sacred Body and Blood signify the Death of Christ, so the uniting of the two sacred species represents His Resurrection, and this interpretation we have adopted in the text. Bellarmine translates *consecratio* as "the union of the consecrated Body and Blood."

THE PRAYERS FOR PEACE

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata
mundi, miserere nobis.¹

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata
mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata
mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takest away
the sins of the world, have mercy
upon us.

Lamb of God, who takest away
the sins of the world, have mercy
upon us.

Lamb of God, who takest away
the sins of the world, grant us
peace.

Lamb of God! Christ is in truth the Lamb of God, who laid down His life for us and took it up again, triumphant over death.

(a) Should not the priest direct his prayer for mercy and compassion to Christ, particularly as he is about to be a guest at the table of the Divine Lamb? Should his confidence be shaken? If a lamb is a type of purity and innocence, goodness and justice (*cf.* Luke 10:3), it naturally is a type of Christ, even apart from the immediate application which Holy Scripture² makes of the term to our Lord. It naturally applies to Him, who, although "holy and innocent" (Heb. 7:26), freely subjected Himself (*cf.* Matt. 26:53) to the death of the Cross, and accepted the sentence with meekness and without resistance (*cf. ibid.*, 52, 63).

(b) Moreover, the Divine Lamb was slain on the very day, and at the very hour, when the lambs of sacrifice were immolated in the Temple of Jerusalem.

(c) Thus was fully accomplished the prophecy of Isaias, which had foretold centuries beforehand that the sacrificial lamb in the Old Law would be replaced by a more perfect Victim, the Lamb of

¹ In Masses for the Dead the priest says, *Dona eis requiem* ("Grant them peace"), instead of, *Miserere nobis* ("Have mercy upon us").

² Thus St. John calls Christ the Lamb about thirty times in the Apocalypse alone.

God, under the New Dispensation. This Lamb will be offered and will atone for sin by His death. He will be without spot, He will suffer with patience, and will possess peace and give it.

The priest begins the last prayer for peace, in which the meaning is more clearly expressed and the theme is more fully developed :

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis: Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis, ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiæ tuæ; eamque secundum voluntatem tuam pacificare et coadunare digneris. Qui vivis et regnas, Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to Thy Apostles: Peace I leave to you, My peace I give unto you; look not on my sins, but on the faith of Thy Church; and vouchsafe to it that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will; who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

The kiss of peace, which is here given, conveys the same idea. The kissing of the altar (the altar is here meant to represent Christ) and the kiss of peace,¹ or the mutual salutation of celebrant and assisting ministers, both typify the bond of peace which unites the Master and His disciples, and consequently the love which children of the one Faith should bear to one another.

With eyes now fixed on the sacred host, the priest awaits the coming of His Lord. He no longer represents the whole Church, but speaks in his own person as a sinner in need of grace, and about to receive His Lord and God in holy communion. He therefore prays in words of the deepest humility, overwhelmed at his own unworthiness, as follows :

Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris co-operante Spiritu sancto per

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who according to the will of the Father, through

¹ The pax or a small golden plate (*instrumentum pacis, osculatorium*), on which an image of the Redeemer is often engraved, is sometimes used for distributing the kiss of peace.

mortem tuam mundum vivificasti; libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus et Sanguinem tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis et universis malis, et fac me tuis semper inhærere mandatis, et a te numquam separari permittas. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world; deliver me by this, Thy most sacred Body and Blood, from all my iniquities and from all evils, and make me always adhere to Thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from Thee. Who with the same God the Father and Holy Ghost livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

The following prayer is said in the same spirit and tone of voice :

Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christi, quod ego indignus sumere præsumo, non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem; sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis et ad medelam percipiendam. Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Let not the participation of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; but through Thy goodness, may it be to me a safeguard and remedy, both of soul and body. Who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

In conclusion the priest adds :

Panem coelestem accipiam et nomen Domini invocabo.

I will take the Bread of heaven, and call upon the name of the Lord.

THE PRIEST'S COMMUNION

The celebrant genuflects, takes the sacred host in his left hand, and strikes his breast with the right, repeating the prayer of the centurion of Capharnaum :

Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

As a last act of preparation for receiving his Lord the priest makes the sign of the Cross with the sacred Body of his crucified Saviour and says :

Corpus Domini nostri Jesu
Christi, custodiat animam meam
in vitam æternam. Amen.

May the Body of our Lord
Jesus Christ preserve my soul to
life everlasting. Amen.

The celebrant then consumes the sacred species. He has been called to the nuptial supper of the Lamb (Ap. 19:9). He may see and taste how sweet the Lord is. Truly he has found Him, whom his soul loveth (*cf.* Cant. 3:1). Chosen from amongst many, to represent his Lord, he now possesses Him in his heart; and the interior union between Master and servant is so close, that the priest lives in Christ and Christ in him (*cf.* John 6:57).

In joy and gratitude he utters this solemn prayer of thanksgiving:

Quid retribuam Domino pro
omnibus, quæ retribuit mihi?
Calicem salutaris accipiam et
nomen Domini invocabo. Laudans
invocabo Dominum et ab inimicis
meis salvus ero.

What shall I render to the
Lord for all He has rendered unto
me? I will take the chalice of
salvation, and call upon the name
of the Lord. I will call upon the
Lord and praise Him, and I shall
be saved from my enemies.

While he is saying this prayer he collects any fragments that may remain upon the paten or corporal and places them in the chalice.

After a few moments' adoration the priest again genuflects, adores the precious Blood of his Lord, and then in gratitude he makes the Cross with the chalice and partakes of the precious Blood, saying:

Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu
Christi custodiat animam meam in
vitam æternam. Amen.

The Blood of our Lord Jesus
Christ preserve my soul to ever-
lasting life. Amen.

The celebrant communicates under both kinds, just as he separately consecrates the bread and wine in order to complete the Sacrifice.¹ But all

¹ The faithful should also receive Holy Communion, in conformity with the true spirit of the Mass and in compliance with the express wish of the Council of Trent and our Holy Father, Pope Pius X. Communion, in fact, was a standing rule in the primitive Church. All who assisted at the Divine Sacrifice should at least make an act of

besides the celebrant, whether clergy or laity, who receive communion, receive it only under one kind according to the present discipline of the Church, but in so doing they receive Christ wholly and entirely.

(a) The consuming fire of sacrifice symbolised Jehovah in the Old Law, and if the sacrificial victim were cast into the fire by the priest to be totally consumed by its devouring flames it was called a whole burnt offering. But the love of Jesus Christ has modified man's relation to God. The sin offering is no longer exacted of mankind, for Jesus has taken upon Himself the burden of sin. As God, He demands a sacrifice of expiation, but He offers Himself as the Victim for the salvation of all. Thus the holocaust of the Old Law, which was consumed by the sacrificial fire in the Temple, has been replaced by the Heavenly Victim, who is lovingly consumed in the communion of the Mass.

(b) Moreover this inexpressible Mystery of Faith foreshadows a higher order of existence. Christ enters by Holy Communion into the closest union with the Christian soul, who thereby acquires a foretaste of the glory to be revealed when the whole being of man will be assimilated in God,¹ through Christ and in Christ and with Christ. This union may be unintelligible to us now, but it will be none the less real and transcendent and eternal.

(c) Finally Holy Communion, or the presence of Christ in the heart of the priest or layman, is, in

spiritual communion while the priest communicates, even if they do not approach the sacred table.

In the early Church, men received the sacred host in the hollow or the right hand, while women received it on a linen cloth, called the *Dominicale*. This name was given to it because it had to bear the Body of the Lord (*Dominus*). The faithful were also allowed during the first persecutions to receive the Blessed Sacrament in their houses.

¹ Although, of course, retaining its personal identity.

a more mystical sense, the type of Christ's burial in the new sepulchre, or it reminds us of Christ's eucharistic meal with the two disciples of Emmaus.

AFTER THE COMMUNION

Since Christ is present in every particle of the sacred host and in every single drop of the precious Blood, the rubrics prescribe that, as we have said, the particles should be carefully collected on the corporal or on the paten. This takes place before the partaking of the chalice. Afterwards the chalice also must be carefully purified with wine, while the priest must wash the fingers which have come into contact with the sacred host with wine and water. Meanwhile the following prayer is said :

Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus; et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum.

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis, quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis, et præsta, ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt Sacramenta. Qui vivis, &c.

Grant, Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind; and of a gift in time may it become unto us an eternal remedy.

May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my heart, and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been refreshed with pure and holy sacraments. Who livest, &c.

The act of thanksgiving prescribed by the liturgy after communion is very short. The Church rather hastens to set the priest free, so that in mental prayers he may open his heart to God. The liturgy merely prescribes the reading of the "Communion" and "Post-Communion"; both these prayers vary with the feast.

The "Communion" consists of an antiphon, the remnant of a much longer Psalm, which was sung during the communion of the faithful, whence its name.

The "Post-Communion" is a prayer in honour of the Saint whose feast the Church celebrates, and corresponds with the special collect and secret of which mention has already been made. It is generally a prayer of thanksgiving and a petition for the protection of the Saint, and for the practice of his virtues by the faithful.

In the meantime, the missal has been carried to the Epistle side; a symbol, many liturgical writers maintain, of the second preaching to the Jews of the same Gospel which their forefathers rejected.

CONCLUSION OF THE MASS

The celebrant kisses the altar upon which the Divine Victim has been immolated, then turning to the people, he addresses to them the usual greeting once more, and announces the end of the Mass :¹

P. Dominus vobiscum.

S. Et cum spiritu tuo.

P. Ite, missa est.

S. Deo Gratias.

P. The Lord be with you.

S. And with thy spirit.

P. Go, the Mass is ended.

S. Thanks be to God.

The celebrant dedicates² once more the Divine Sacrifice to the Most Holy Trinity in a final prayer, which recapitulates the chief ends of the Mass.³ He kisses the altar as a token of the mystical em-

¹ The Mass concludes in this manner, at least on feast days, when the *Gloria in Excelsis* is said. In the penitential seasons, when the faithful were invited to join in the "canonical hours," the *Benedicamus Domino* ("Let us bless the Lord") was said, while in Requiem Masses the service ended with the words, *Requiescant in pace* ("May they rest in peace"). The archæological reason for the omission of the *Ite, missa est* during the penitential season and in Masses for the Dead is, according to Hefele (*Beiträge*), that the Absolutions were still to be given after the Requiem Mass, namely, at the tomb or catafalque, and that on days of penance various other prayers were said. In both, therefore, the moment of departure could not be announced at the usual time.

² This prayer is a later addition to the Mass.

³ A Sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, impetration, and propitiation.

brace between the Saviour and himself; turning to the multitude of faithful souls, he bestows, like our Redeemer at the close of His earthly mission, a final blessing:

Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meæ et præsta ut sacrificium quod oculis tuæ Majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihi que, et omnibus pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius ✠ et Spiritus sanctus. Amen.

O holy Trinity, let the performance of my homage be pleasing to Thee; and grant that the Sacrifice which I, unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy Majesty may be acceptable to Thee, and through Thy mercy be a propitiation for me, and for all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you. Amen.

The whole ceremony concludes in most cases¹ with the

BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt; et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est; in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebræ eam non comprehend-erunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine. Erat lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made: in Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to give testimony of the light. That was

¹ When, however, as is generally the case, an ordinary Sunday or a privileged feria (*i.e.* Ember Days and week days in Lent) is also a feast of our Lord, our Lady, or some Saint, the Mass is of the feast, and the last Gospel is the Gospel of the Sunday.

In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri: his qui credunt in nomine ejus, qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitavit in nobis: et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

S. Deo Gratias.

the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God: to those that believe in His name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt amongst us: and we saw His glory, as it were the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

S. Thanks be to God.

Why does the Church end the Mass with this Gospel? Because it is a short summary of our belief, says Pope Benedict XIV. The sublime narrative which St. John, soaring with eagle's flight far above the earth, has written, is a confession of the greatest truths of Christianity. It reviews the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the wonders of creation, and recalls the Divine and Human Natures of Christ, His Teaching, His Passion, His Office of Priest and Victim in Holy Mass, the centre and soul of Catholic worship.



THE LAST SUPPER. FRESCO BY RAPHAEL, XVI. CENTURY

CHAPTER IV

LITURGICAL VESTMENTS: THE CHALICE AND OTHER REQUISITES FOR HOLY MASS

GIFTS the noblest and best God claims from us for His worship. This principle, which Christianity has practised from its very birth to the present day, is chiefly applied in the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass.

The tendency to infuse a spiritual principle into every material element was but the natural outcome of new forces which moulded opinions in the early Middle Ages. The spiritual side of life in all its wealth and vigour captivated men's hearts and dominated all their thoughts, until they saw everything around them spiritually transfigured. But this tendency had full play in all that had reference to religion or divine faith. It was then but natural that in the Middle Ages men should see in the vestments, worn by the priest exclusively during the celebration of Mass, a constant allusion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, or looked upon these garments as so many incentives to devotion for both priest and people. They had the more reason for this as the Church herself by example and precept and the language of her prayers taught the symbolical meaning of her vestments.

We need not remind the reader of the fact that even before the time of Christ a distinctive dress was used by priests and Levites among the Jews

for the service of the Temple, as many passages of Scripture sufficiently prove.

The often debated question¹ whether the Old Testament vestments really suggested those worn in our own Church, can only be briefly referred to here.

The Jewish priest, when officiating in the Temple, wore a distinctive dress, the particulars of which were minutely prescribed by God Himself.² This dress had, moreover, a symbolical meaning, which liturgical writers in the Middle Ages loved to dwell on, before applying the same interpretation to the vestments of the Catholic Church. This was chiefly the case with the more important vestments of the High Priest: the long, white linen tunic (*kethonet*), which was gathered together at the waist by a girdle (*abnet*), ornamented with scarlet, purple, and blue; the purple outer garment (*meil*), over which came the "ephod," which was wrought with various colours and hung from the shoulders. That there is a distinct resemblance between these garments and our liturgical vestments, that some of them, even through later developments, have served as types for the dress of the Church, is a statement which rests on sound and scholarly arguments.

However, we cannot here trace in detail the historical development of Church vestments, nor can we find space for all the arguments which

¹ Dr. Hefele, *Beiträge zur Kirchengesch.*, *Archäologie, Liturg.*, ii., Tübingen, 1864; Bock, *Gesch. der liturg. Gewänder*, Bonn, 1871; W. Marriott, *Vestiarius Christian.*, London, 1868; Krazer O. P., *De apost. necnon antiquis liturgiis*, Aug. Vind., 1786; Kraus, *Real-Lex*; Gühr, *das H. Meszopfer*, Freib., 1902; Thalhofer, *Liturg.*, Freib., 1887; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, Paris, 1894; J. Wilpert, *Storia del vestiario*, Roma, 1898; Kaufmann, *Handb. der christl. Archæol.*, Paderb., 1905.

² Cf. Exod. 28, Leviticus, and Numbers.

support what we think is true. We merely give the opinion which follows. The archæological researches of the last few years show that the garment worn by the celebrant during the celebration of Mass in the days of the Apostles and their immediate successors did not materially differ from the dress worn by Roman civilians of rank. Thus, for instance, the alb is the white festival tunic of the Romans (*tunica alba, poderis, talaris, camisa*). It became the liturgical vestment for solemn functions of the Church. The cloak worn on journeys or when walking, the *paenula*, was adopted as the sacred outer garment (*casula* or *planeta*), the chasuble of the present day.

True, the Council of Trent mentions that the liturgical vestments were introduced by apostolic constitutions and tradition. But this opinion, which later discoveries have confirmed, means that the Church did not adopt the ordinary garb of everyday life (*vestes communes*), but selected particular articles of dress—the very best, in fact—for her liturgical functions. Moreover, the rubrics of the primitive Church restricted their use to the celebration of the divine mysteries, and for that reason ornamental strips of cloth were added (*clavus*).

When in the course of time ordinary attire underwent a complete change, the Church retained these garments for her own sacred worship. They did not lose their original character but became the distinctive dress of the servants of the altar. This was due as much to the representations of Christian art as to the prescriptions of the Roman ritual. It would carry us too far afield to trace the remarkable development of both liturgy and art in history. Moreover, our main purpose is to follow the ordinary lines of the numerous symboli-

cal meanings given to the liturgical vestments of the Church.¹

Every liturgical vestment had its own symbolical meaning, which is interpreted in various ways. We do not, however, imply that this symbolical character has an historical origin, as the symbolical interpretations are often due to circumstances which are non-historical. But when once the vestments were adopted in the liturgical functions of the Church, they forthwith acquired a spiritual character which was universally accepted, and which the Church soon ratified by introducing a formula of prayer. The formulas which she prescribes are three in number, and are used at the consecration or degradation of a cleric, or when the priest vests for a sacred function.

The Church's thought is therefore clearly discernible in the development of the symbolical meaning which has been attached to the sacred vestments of Holy Mass.²

We make no reference here to the various edifying interpretations of many saintly writers, interpretations which are peculiar to the authors. We prefer to follow in our explanations, as we have already mentioned, the official language of the Church.

This symbolism is twofold. It is allegorical, as referring to the Passion of our Lord, or moral, as referring to the moral teaching of Christianity.

(I) The allegorical sense springs from the close connection between the Sacrifice of the Cross and Holy Mass. The explanations of the liturgy, which famous ecclesiastical writers have given on their

¹ That is, the vestments of ordinary priests ; for the Bishop, like the High Priest in the Old Law, had his own special dress.

² All vestments which are used in the liturgy have, strictly speaking, to be blessed by the Bishop.

own authority, and which the people eventually adopted, strictly speaking, without the concurrence of the Church, emphasised the relations existing between the clothing of our Saviour, or the instruments of His Passion, and the vestments of the priest.

THE AMICE¹

The amice, which formerly was also called the *humurale* or *super-humurale*, represents the cloth with which the soldiers ignominiously blindfolded Christ, while they asked Him, saying: "Prophecy who is it that struck Thee?" (Luke 22: 64).

THE ALB²

The alb is the white garment in which Herod and his court mockingly clothed the Eternal Wisdom, treating Him as a fool.

THE GIRDLE³

The girdle denotes the ropes with which the executioners bound Jesus in the garden, or the cords with which He was tied to the column of flagellation, or the whips wherewith His sacred Flesh was cruelly scourged.

THE MANIPLE⁴

The maniple recalls the ropes or cords which bound Christ as a malefactor.

¹ The amice is a white linen cloth, cast (whence the word *amictus*) over the neck and shoulders (*humurale*); formerly it also covered the head, a custom still observed in some religious orders.

² The long, white linen garment which covers the body from the shoulders to the feet.

³ The cord which gathers the alb at the waist.

⁴ A small silk ornament worn on the left arm of the priest: it was originally a cloth which was intended for ordinary use, and was carried in the hand (*manipulus*); a handkerchief or napkin (*sudarium*). The exact relation between the original cloth and its present form in the liturgy cannot easily be determined.

THE STOLE¹

The stole symbolises the Cross which our Saviour had to bear, or the cords which dragged Him to Calvary.

THE CHASUBLE²

The chasuble represents the garment in which He was derided as King of the Jews. The stripe on it is a figure of the column of flagellation, while the Cross is for the Cross which He carried. As covering all the other vestments, it symbolises the infinite charity of Christ.

(2) The moral significance of this symbolism is shown where the Church prescribes certain prayers to be said when sacramental power is conferred on her ministers, when clerics are degraded from their office, and when the priest vests for the Sacrifice of the Mass. Hence the following interpretations :

THE AMICE

(a) The amice symbolises the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6: 17), which denotes the supernatural hope (1 Thess. 5: 8) of a heavenly reward, which gives us a powerful defence "to stand against the deceits of the devil" (Eph. 6: 11).

(b) It further covers the neck and shoulders: a warning to the priest to be grave in his speech. For when the Bishop places the amice on the head of the ordinand, he admonishes him "to restrain his voice." In this sense the amice reminds the

¹ A long, narrow strip of cloth hanging from the neck to the knees and crossed over the breast. Originally it was a cloth like the maniple, and was used in all probability for wiping the mouths of the communicants after receiving the precious Blood: whence its name of *orarium*.

² The outer garment of the officiating priest. When made in the Roman shape, the chasuble has a broad stripe or column (*latus clavus*) on the back and a cross in front.

celebrant to observe silence and to foster a spirit of recollection during the sacred mysteries. "If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man" (Jas. 3:2).

The prayer used for the amice runs thus: "Place on my head, O Lord, the helmet of salvation to ward off the attacks of the evil one."

THE ALB¹

Note the colour and material of this linen garment.

(a) The whiteness of the alb is the symbol of the unsullied purity of God's Saints who are clothed in white robes (Ap. 7:13). The white tunic is the garment of both Angels and Saints, and thus it signifies the newness of life required of Christians (Rom. 6:4), or the immaculate joys of the blessed.

(b) The linen of the alb becomes spotless white when bleached in the sun. Thus God's graces and the practice of virtue purify, sanctify, and strengthen man's soul. Hence the resplendent white linen (*byssinum*) denotes in the Apocalypse "the good and just actions of God's Saints" (Ap. 19:8).

(c) Thus purity and good works prepare the priest for the Divine Sacrifice.

When putting on the alb the priest says: "Make me white, O Lord, and cleanse my heart, that, sanctified by the Blood of the Lamb, I may attain everlasting joy."

THE GIRDLE

(a) The girdle suggests the "girding of the loins" once customary among workmen and soldiers. It thus indicates the fight which the sacred worker

¹ The shorter vestment, called the cotta, surplice, or rochet, comes from the alb, and has a similar symbolical meaning.

and soldier of God, the priest, wages in the service of his Lord.

(b) The girdle also denotes a restraint upon our wicked inclinations, and so stands for the purity which must deck him who is to partake of the bread of angels (Ps. 77:25) and the wine which bringeth forth virgins (Zach. 9:17).

The prayer used for the girdle is: "Gird me, O Lord, with the girdle of purity, and extinguish in me the fire of concupiscence, that there may remain in me the virtue of continence and chastity."

THE MANIPLE

This is used exclusively during the celebration of Mass. The Bishop, when conferring the order of the sub-diaconate, says: "Receive the maniple, which denotes the fruit of good works."

There is, no doubt, some reference here to the words of the 125th Psalm (5-7): "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves (*manipulos suos*)."¹ They shall reap the fruit of their good works, but only as the reward of painful exertions and self-sacrifice: and the promise of heavenly consolation after all the trials of this life is contained in the prayer which the priest says when taking the maniple: "Let me merit, O Lord, to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that I may receive the reward of my labour with joy."

THE STOLE

The symbolical meaning of this vestment of the deacon is very involved. The stole had another name in the early Church. Although it is now

a long narrow strip of cloth passing over the shoulder, it was originally¹ a kind of purificator, with which the deacon wiped the mouths of those who partook of the chalice. Hence it was generally known as *orarium* (handkerchief), from the Latin *os* (mouth).

When the laity no longer partook of the chalice, the original purpose of the *orarium* was forgotten, and the word was then unfortunately derived from *orare*, to pray. It thus became a figure of the prayer of prayers, the preaching of God's word.

And what should be the properties of this preaching? Holy Scripture tells us that wisdom shall fill the preacher with the spirit of understanding, and shall clothe him with a robe (*stola*) of glory (Eccli. 15 : 5). The transition was simple. Preaching itself was called the *stola gloriæ* (the robe of glory), and the stole or preaching vestment was soon identified by a false etymology with the ancient *orarium*.

(a) The stole is worn by priests round the neck. When used for preaching or for any sacrament except Mass it hangs straight down. The celebrant at Mass crosses his breast with it. In the first instance it represents the yoke of Christ, which is both sweet and light (Matt. 11 : 30). When crossed over the breast, it reminds us that the Cross should be borne in our hearts. By deacons it is worn diagonally over the left shoulder.

(b) The stole denotes the white robe of sanctifying grace; as suggested in the prayer used by the priest: "Give me back, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which I have lost through the prevarication of our

¹ The stole was a kind of handkerchief or napkin (*sudarium, orarium*) used in the West, except Rome, where the maniple served the same purpose. They were both adopted in the liturgy at a later period for quite different purposes.

first parents ; and although I am unworthy to approach Thy holy mysteries, may I nevertheless deserve to attain everlasting joy."

THE CHASUBLE

The chasuble¹ is the noblest of all the sacerdotal vestments, the vestment proper of the priest.

(a) It is made of the richest materials ; it is large and covers all the other vestments, as it were, in protection. From this idea of a protective covering the symbolical meaning has been developed. The chasuble stands for charity, which excels and embraces all other virtues. And the Bishop speaks in this strain when conferring the sacred order of priesthood : "Receive the priestly garment, which symbolises charity."

(b) Charity is the chief virtue of the priest. The priest, says St. Bonaventure, must consecrate himself entirely to the service of his neighbour, if he is to be the faithful servant of Christ crucified.

(c) The Cross in front or on the back² of the chasuble is the most apt type of the twofold manifestation of the one virtue of charity. The practice of charity is often a cross, a burden, and a yoke, and the chasuble laid upon the shoulders is a figure of this. Charity involves the exercise of many other virtues symbolically represented by the different liturgical colours of this vestment.

(d) But charity makes cross and yoke both sweet and light, because it finds its support in the firm

¹ Very little symbolical meaning is attached to the "dalmatic" (*dalmatica major*) of the deacon, or to the "tunic" (*dalmatica minor*) of the sub-deacon. The former is called in the prayers of ordination the "vestment of austerity and blessing," on account of its original colour in the liturgy, red and white ; while the latter was known as the "garment of strength," because of its close-fitting form of a coat.

² In some countries during the Middle Ages chasubles were ornamented with a Cross both on the back and in front.

trust of the soul in God's beneficent goodness. Thus the priest, when he puts on the chasuble, says: "O God, who hast said, My yoke is sweet and My burden light, grant that I may be made strong to bear this yoke, and so obtain Thy grace."

THE SACRED VESSELS

The chalice and paten come into immediate contact with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and hence they are pre-eminently sacred vessels.

THE CHALICE

The chalice, which contains the Precious Blood, is a figure of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the divine centre from which Christ's saving Blood has flowed in all ages and still flows. It is also a mystical reminder of the Blessed Virgin, who gave to the world our Lord's sacred Body and Blood.

THE PATEN

The paten is a gold or gilded plate, upon which the host is laid. It is thus a figure of the Cross.

The shape of the paten and its name (*patere*, to lie open), warrant the following mystical interpretation. It represents openness of heart (*cf.* 2 Cor. 2:4), particularly that of the Apostles, who listened eagerly to Christ's teaching. But while the terrible drama of the Passion was being enacted (and the Canon commemorates this) the disciples fled in fear, and hid themselves till the day of the Resurrection. So the paten is concealed in high Mass under the veil, in a low Mass under the corporal, in both cases from the beginning of

the Canon until the *Pater Noster*, which is its close.¹

Both chalice and paten are a figure of the new sepulchre, in which Christ is pleased to rest and be in our midst. Thus the words of consecration run: "May these sacred vessels through the grace of the Holy Spirit become a new sepulchre for the Body and Blood of the Lord."

Both are golden vessels;² the preciousness of the metal is a fitting type of the King of Kings.

But since neither the chalice nor the paten are worthy to receive our Divine Lord, however rich or beautiful they may be, both are consecrated with holy oils by the Bishop. The chrism is the symbol of the grace of God the Holy Ghost, of its sweet odour and healing powers. A fitting preparation indeed for receiving Him whom God hath anointed with the oil of gladness (Is. 44 : 8).

THE CORPORAL AND PALL³

The corporal and pall, which are blessed with the same formula, originally were one. They symbolise the swaddling-clothes of the Divine Infant, and also the clean linen cloth (Matt. 27 : 59) in

¹ From a historical point of view the concealing of the paten may be explained as follows. The paten was originally of larger dimensions, and was only used for the division of the host after the *Pater Noster*. It was therefore kept until that part of the Mass by an acolyte who was not allowed to touch the sacred vessels. He therefore covered it with a cloth, and held it in his hands. After the *Pater Noster* he presented it to the priest.

² Chalices may be and often are of silver, but the inside of the cup at least must be gilt.

³ The corporal or linen cloth was up to the twelfth century of such dimensions as to cover the surface of the altar upon which the chalice and host rested and at the same time serve as a covering for the chalice. Its size is at present greatly diminished, and it only receives the chalice and host, while the pall, which is a stiff piece of linen, square in shape, covers the chalice.

which the lifeless Body of our Lord was borne to the grave by Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus.

The pall denotes the napkin (*sudarium*, John 20 : 7), which enveloped the sacred Head of Jesus.

The material of both corporal and pall, fine linen, represents the spotless Body of Jesus in its earthly as well as in its glorified condition, and suggests the purity of soul required of both the priest and people who take part in Holy Mass.

These four sacred objects, when taken together, are a figure of Christ's Death. The chalice is the sepulchre, the paten represents the stone rolled to the door of the monument, the corporal symbolises the linen cloths in which the Body of Jesus was bound (John 19 : 40), while the pall denotes the napkin that had been about His sacred Head (*ib.* 20 : 7).



PROCESSION OF THE MOST BLESSED
SACRAMENT : DIFFERENT VESTMENTS

CHAPTER V

LITURGICAL COLOURS

GOD'S Holy Church possesses a liturgy which is the fruit of two virtues, faith and charity. The more deeply we enter into this sacred subject, the more convinced do we become of its power to give fervour to the innermost convictions of the human soul. Its beauty is so captivating, because it possesses truth without flaw.

In many cases, if not in most, as there is some reason to believe, this sacred liturgy has not been consciously developed on a fixed plan. It is rather the outcome of custom, the product of the ideas and feelings of an age imbued with the poetry of faith. The Church confined her attention to a general supervision, maintaining conformity in liturgical functions and opposing arbitrary changes.

This, too, is in substance the origin of liturgical colours. The Church, it is true, has prescribed certain colours for the different feasts in her calendar, and they serve as so many ornaments of her worship. But these prescriptions belong to a later period. They date from about the fifteenth century. The faithful themselves anticipated the action of the Church, for the symbolical meaning of the liturgical colours had been ages before in the popular mind.

Colours have had a symbolical meaning from the earliest times. The symbolical sense of the colours accepted in the public worship of Israel is given in Scripture itself. The colours adopted by the Jews

for their religious functions were four in number. Dark blue, the colour of the Eastern sky, symbolised divine revelation and all that had reference to it; light purple was the type of royal power; crimson, the colour of blood, denoted sacrifices of propitiation; while resplendent white was the symbol of purity and holiness.

This enumeration shows that the early Christians did not at first adopt the symbolical colours of the Jewish religion. For the Christian liturgy originally recognised but one colour for the vestments of Mass, and this colour was white. For white is the colour of light, and they were the children of light (John 12 : 36), born again spiritually of Christ, the Light of the world. Therefore, says Clement of Alexandria, "only one garb becomes those whose hearts are undefiled, a modest white garment." White retained its symbolical character and predominance even in the second half of the Middle Ages, for the Church still fought her battle against the spirit of darkness, the devil.

After this period the different liturgical colours were gradually and almost imperceptibly adopted. This fact is sufficiently clear from the representations exhibited in old mosaics and pictures, and from the few details given in the works of mediæval writers. No doubt fresh colours were added, primarily as an ornament of ecclesiastical vestments,¹ but at the same time they embodied the meaning which we still attach to the liturgical colours. Hence we may say that, at least since

¹ We cannot here show in detail how the liturgical colours have influenced the development of art, any more than we can find space to speak of the important place occupied in art by the sacred vestments. We merely call the reader's attention to the study of liturgical colours by the following authors: Hefele, *Beiträge II.*, Tübingen, 1864; W. Legg, *Notes on the History of Liturgical Colours*, London, 1882; *Zur symbol. der liturg.*, Farben (z. f. Chr. K. 1901).

the time of Pope Innocent III., the five liturgical colours of our rite were commonly accepted by the people, independently of any direct prescription of the Church. These colours were, and still are :

White, red, green, purple, and black.

The first official Missal issued by order of Pope Pius V. (1579) rendered the use of these colours obligatory, and accurately defined their details.¹ Brown, yellow (orange), and blue (indigo)—which were here and there adopted as liturgical colours—were at the same time excluded from the list.

We have confined ourselves so far to the liturgical colours, particularly of Holy Mass, and to a study of their origin. Art, however, in former ages also presented combinations of colours in the decoration of churches (in tapestries, frescoes, mural paintings), and thus offered an important series of types embodying various truths applicable to daily life. To take a few examples at random : green was the figure of reflective thought, black denoted self-denial, yellow represented sorrow, while red and white were respectively the symbols of charity and purity of heart. Colours serve, too, as figures of speech. We speak of the golden wisdom of the Apostles, of silver-tongued orators ; the contemplative life has all the shades of the beautiful hyacinth ; purple distinguishes the martyrs ; scarlet is the symbol of burning charity ; we find the grey penitential garb of confessors, the resplen-

¹ Every vestment, for instance, must have but one fundamental colour (*color prædominans*), and the colours cannot be mixed in such a way that one vestment may be used for another. Vestments made of yellow (silk or linen) cloth have been expressly and repeatedly forbidden. Vestments of gold may be used instead of green, red, or white vestments. They cannot take the place of purple or black. Those of silver can only be used as white.

dent white linen robes (*byssus*) of virgins, and the white mantle of royalty. For white was in early days the distinctive dress of Princes, and is still the colour of the Pope's attire; and when the Jews and Pagans derided and reviled our Divine Saviour, they clothed Him in white, as a royal mantle, in scorn.

Precious stones and other valuable objects, flowers,¹ virtues and vices, and so on, also had their symbolical colours. The *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the greatest product of literary genius in the Middle Ages, portrays Satan with four heads of different colours, types of the four chief deadly sins. In a word, symbolism of colours was the natural consequence of the vivid imagination of the Middle Ages.

We will not attempt to describe here the thoughts which have inspired these symbols, for they are not the sentiments which have suggested the symbolism adopted in the liturgy of Holy Mass which we are explaining. We shall confine ourselves chiefly to the instructions laid down by the Church herself. These prescriptions, which were introduced into the text of the ceremonial prayers, were usually printed in red type (*rubrica*). Hence they were called *rubricæ* or rubrics. The rubrics, then, will be our chief authority in treatment of liturgical colours.

WHITE

White designates fulness of light. It is therefore by nature the figure of the perfection of God, who

¹ For flowers used as church decorations, cf. M. Kolb, *Pflanzen- und Blumenschmuck am Altar und Kirche*, Kempten, 1895; A. Reiners, *Die Pflanze als Symbol u. Schmuck i. Heiligthume*, Regensb. 1887; A. Rütter, *Die Pflanzenwelt im Dienste der Kirche*, Regensb. 1891; W. A. Barrett, *Flowers and Festivals; the Floral Decoration of Churches*, London, 1868.

is the Sun of justice, and of Christ, who is the Light of the world (John 8:12). Thus white vestments are the appropriate dress of the Church on the feasts of the Blessed Trinity, and for all Masses in honour of our divine Lord which do not directly commemorate His sorrowful Passion and Death.

God made Man is the Light of men (John 1:4), leading them from the darkness of death into the light, that they may become children of light (John 12:36), that they may possess the throne which is prepared for them in heaven and live in the light of God's countenance. Heaven indeed is the abode of light, the realm of spotless purity. There we see, says the Apocalypse, the Angels, the ancients, all God's Saints, wearing white garments, and clothed in a vesture of joy. The horses, even, the clouds, the throne, and the costly seal, all are of white. Numerous passages of Scripture clearly indicate that the colour of white¹ is the symbol of perfect purity and of heaven's enchanting beauty.

The same thought pervades the sacred liturgy. White carries back our minds to the Blessed who shine with the glory of heaven. It is the colour for the feasts of Angels and Saints, for confessors, virgins, penitents and widows, for all who walk with Christ, clothed with white robes.

The Church, for the self-same reason, has chosen white as the liturgical colour of her vestments when performing solemn functions, such as administering baptism, holding processions, celebrating marriages, consecrating churches, and in most of her blessings.

White, too, is the natural colour for all feasts which commemorate the sweet memory of the

¹ White and red are the colours used for joyful feasts in the liturgy. The question of liturgical colours, however, only applies to the stole, maniple, chasuble, and in some cases to the girdle.

Immaculate Virgin Mary, the flower of wondrous brightness, the heavenly lily of resplendent beauty, the spotless maiden. She, who is venerated as Queen of Heaven and of Angels, is clothed with the sun, and on her head is a crown of twelve stars (Apoc. 12 : 1).

In a word, white is in the eyes of the Church the symbol of purity and joy. Both go together, and give us here a foretaste of the glory of heaven to come.

Since this is the symbolical teaching of the Church's liturgy, symbolism gives the faithful to understand that they must prove their virtue, and, after the example of God's dear Saints, preserve their hearts as pure and white as snow.

RED

The next liturgical colour is red. Its warmth symbolises fire, its colour is that of blood. In the Old Law it was the figure both of sin and of its expiation by shedding of blood. Later our Saviour's death and the descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of tongues of fire introduced a further meaning. Red then denoted the self-denial and love of suffering which characterised Christ's relations with mankind, and which man in turn should manifest towards God. For suffering, says Henry Suso, clothes the soul in a robe of purple hue ; it is a crown of red roses encircling our brow.

Red is therefore the liturgical colour for feasts of the Holy Ghost and of the Passion of Christ. Red recalls, too, the memory of the Apostles,¹ who planted the Church in their blood, and of martyrs who have accounted their life as nothing if they might follow their Lord to Calvary. Red, too, is used for feasts of martyrs.

¹ With the exception of St. John, who died a natural death.

Red, as representing charity, is further the emblem of the interior life of every Christian. The heart must be consumed with the fervent love of God the Holy Ghost.

GREEN

Green is the colour of nature in spring; it symbolises, too, the firm hope of gaining for ourselves all the blessings which the sunniest of summers, that is, heaven, will bring. This thought inspired the Church in early days to paint the wood of the Cross a green colour, for the Cross is the source of all our joyful expectation of future happiness. Green, then, is the colour of hope, the virtue which consoles the heart as verdure refreshes the eye.

Our hope of rising one day to eternal life is based on the resurrection of Christ from the dead (*cf.* 1 Cor. 15). These two truths were chiefly commemorated on the Sunday in the divine office of the Church even at a very early period. Hence green became the distinctive colour of those Sundays which have no particular festive or sorrowful character, unless an office occurred requiring another colour. Green, then, is used on the Sundays and sometimes on the week-days between the octave of Epiphany and Septuagesima Sunday, and between the octave of Pentecost and Advent.

PURPLE

Purple was formerly considered the emblem of power and of royal dignity. The Church has, however, introduced another meaning, which particularly applies to Holy Mass. Symbolism closely identifies purple with black. The latter rather than the former was used, as a rule, till the end of the thirteenth century, and purple was considered by

Pope Innocent as merely a supplementary liturgical colour.

Purple may be as grey as ash, the symbol of penance, as violet as the modest flower of the same name, which is the emblem of humility and of the longing desire of heaven. It may be of a still darker colour, and is then the type of intense sorrow; and although the symbolical colour of purple does not express the deep note of sadness which is inseparable from black, still it denotes the extreme earnestness, and, above all, the spirit of penance which the liturgy requires of the faithful at fixed periods in the ecclesiastical year. The Church, therefore, prescribes purple for days of penance, such as Advent, Lent, Vigils, Rogation and Ember days; for pilgrimages and processions of atonement; in solemn exorcisms, and in the administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

BLACK

Black is the absence of light, and therefore of joy. Very fittingly, then, the Church has selected this colour for Good Friday, the day of our Saviour's death. "I will make all the lights of heaven to mourn over thee, and I will cause darkness over your land, saith the Lord" (Ezech. 32 : 8). The Church mourns too; her whole religious service is solemnly impressive, her vestments are black, the colour of death.

The same thoughts are suggested throughout the Office of the Dead and the Requiem Mass. The faithful departed are called back to God; they leave behind them their families and friends to deplore their loss, while they themselves undergo perhaps in sorrow and distress the pains of Purgatory. The Church is the tenderest of mothers. She shares,

even in her religious functions, in the sorrows of her children, and the black vestments which she uses are proof of her grief.¹

Black, which is the colour of sorrow, constantly reminds us of the seriousness of life. Every existence, even the happiest, will surely end in death. This thought would be most saddening were we not reminded by this self-same colour of the most consoling of truths. Black recalls to the Christian soul the propitiatory death of our Lord, who has again opened for us the gates of eternal life, and who applies to our souls each day the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross which is perpetuated in Holy Mass.

We ought then to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection.

¹ At the burial of young children, who have died in the innocence of their baptism, the priest is vested not with the black stole of sorrow, but with the white stole of joy.



MINIATURE TAKEN FROM A MEDIEVAL MISSAL AT
CAMBRIDGE: THE LAST SUPPER

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